

THE  
Pillars of Popery  
Thrown Down;  
AND THE  
*Principal Arguments*  
OF THE  
Roman-Catholicks,  
*Answer'd and Confuted:*

And in particular,  
The Specious P L E A for the *Antiquity* and  
*Authority* of the Church of R O M E,  
*Examin'd and Overthrown.*

In an Exchange of LETTERS between *White-*  
*locke Bullstrode* Esq; and the Pretender's Phy-  
sician.

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— *The Power of the Civil Magistrate, in Mat-*  
*ters of Religion, was never called in Question*  
*but by the Enthusiasts of these Latter Times.*

Arch-Bishop Tillotson's Sermon, intituled,  
*The Protestant Religion Vindicated.*

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L O N D O N :

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In an Exchange of LETTERS between William  
Locke Esquire Esq. and the Reverend's Phy-  
lician.

The Power of the Church in Matters  
of Religion was never in Question  
but by the Church of Rome.  
And though I have not been  
able to prove it, I have not  
been able to prove it.

LONDON:  
Printed, and Sold by W. BARNARD at the  
Sign of the Sun in Pall-mall.

THE  
PREFACE



HE Contests between our First Reformers, and the Champions of the Roman Church, are so Voluminous, and many of them so abstruse, that I am very far from thinking they are sufficient to the Vulgar Instruction, or that nothing else can be done to the Purpose upon that Head.

Popery, tho' often worsted, is never silent. Error may want Arguments, but never wants Advocates. The Romish Clergy never cease soliciting for Proselytes, and God knows, are but too diligent and too successful, working upon the Minds of the weak and ignorant Multitude by the most subtle Insinuations, and by Ways adapted to the People they have to do with.

Among all the Arguments they have to use, none have been so popular, none have given them a greater Harvest of the poor, ignorant, impos'd-upon People, than this, of the Authority of the Church, founded upon its Antiquity; the deluded Commonalty, not at all enquiring, whether Antiquity justifies Error, or whether indeed their Church has that Antiquity on its Side, which they boast.

## The PREFACE.

*It may be true, that there was a Church of Rome in the Pure and Primitive Times; when the Orthodox Doctrine of the Gospel of God our Saviour was adorned by Professors and Confessors, Saints and Martyrs innumerable, who were Members of that Church.*

*But they have never yet prov'd to us, that the same Doctrines, without any Intermixtures of Unscriptural Humane Inventions, are professed or practised in the Church of Rome now so call'd; or that the Doctrine of Devils have not since been erected in the room of them.*

*Now if the Church of Rome be thus degenerated, she is no more a True Church of Christ; much less the Catholick Church, but an Adultress divorced and repudiated from her Spouse; and as such, is justly rejected by the Fathers of the Reformation.*

*In this Treat, on one side, all that can be said by Humane Subtilty and Art, to support the Usurp'd Pretensions of the Church of Rome, as now she stands, to the Title and Authority of the only Catholick and Apostolick Church, is offer'd and insisted upon. And I am not afraid to add, is, if I am any Judge, fairly and fully Confuted.*

*I need say no more to recommend it to the Protestant Reader: It is a most useful, instructing, and necessary Work, qualified to fortify the meanest Understanding, against the Insinuations of a subtle, vigilant, and indefatigable Enemy: Let it be read seriously and consider'd impartially, and we need ask the Romanists no Favour in the Argument.*

LETTERS



# LETTERS

BETWEEN

*Dr. WOOD a Roman Catho-  
lick, and WHITELOCKE  
BULSTRODE, Esq; a Mem-  
ber of the Church of England,  
&c.*

*Feb. 27, 1705.*

**H**AVING the Honour, Sir,  
of being nearly related to  
you by Marriage, I take the  
Liberty of demanding a  
Favour of you, which is, that you  
wou'd inform your self of some Pri-  
vileges belonging to the Kings of *Eng-  
land's*

## 2    *LETTERS, &c.*

land's Physician in these Particulars; when the King is *Incognito*, and admits his Grooms of his Bed-Chamber and Gentlemen-Ushers to his own Table, whether the Physicians have not the same Privilege?

2dly, When the King travels, what Table the Physicians eat at? I wou'd be very glad to be inform'd in these Points, because that here are some about my Master, who having been bred in *France* (where Physicians are not esteem'd as in *England*) would degrade us.

Sir *Richard*, of late, is much impair'd in his Health. When I return'd from the Camp with my Master, I found him labouring with a great Heat of Urine, a Difficulty of keeping it, and with a Quantity of Blood mixt with it; but since that he has taken Remedies for it, the Blood is stopt, but the Difficulty of keeping his Urine, which has some little Acrimony in it, still continues, and so will as long as he lives;

# LETTERS, &c. 3

lives; for I never knew any old Person that had it that was ever cured of it; so that I expect it will wear him away, increasing upon him every Month more and more; he may last some time with it, but not Years: My Lady enjoys her Health as usually. Brother *Joseph* and *James* are at the End of their Course of Pages, but what Course of Life they will take next, will not be easie for them to resolve on; and when resolv'd on, will be less easie to pursue. *Res angusta domi* will lie heavy on them, let them steer their Course which way they please: For my part I see nothing left for them but the Sword, which is but a sad Choice for those who have nothing to help out the Pay, especially when Subalterns. Both Sir *Richard* and my Lady have try'd all Means they could to move the King and Queen to make the first a Gentleman-Usher, as being very proper for Court, and very improper for the Army, by reason

4      *LETTERS, &c.*

son of the Delicateness of his Constitution ; but they have been refused, which was very hard, so that now they think of going to the Army this Spring, for which there are great Preparations. It will be my Fate to make a second Campaign, in which I find very little Pleasure, but Necessity has no Law, and I must be in Noise and Confusion, the thing I hate. As for my Wife she gives her most humble Service to you, and has better Health than she had formerly : We have a Daughter and Son ; for the rest of the Family they are all well.

Having given you an Account of the Family, I hope, Brother, that you will not take it ill of me, if I fill up the remaining Part of my Letter with another Subject of a quite different Nature, since that I mean it well. I admire how a Person of your Learning and Perspicuity does not perceive the Weakness of the Principles of the Reformation ; for you, and all the World  
must

## LETTERS, &c. 5

must grant me, that you and I, and every particular Person have as much right to Innovate or Reform, as either *Luther, Calvin, Hen. VIII. Q. Eliz.* or the *Parliament of England*; for if any of these may change what they think fit in Religion, because that their Reason tells them that this Point and that Point is wrong, and not according to Scripture, interpreted by right Reason; then you or I may change in Religion what we think wrong, because we have Reason as well as any of them. And I don't know by what Prerogative they pretend to usurp a Dominion over our Reason. Now if this be true, that every one has this Power, then every one may cut and carve Religion as he pleases, and there can be neither Authority nor Government in the Church itself; for what annihilates the Authority and Government in the Church annihilates the Church: For how can the Church (which is acknowledged by all to be an Hierarchy) subsist with-

## 6 LETTERS, &c.

without Government? And how can Government without Authority? And yet this Absurdity must be allow'd of, if every one be allow'd to change what he thinks fit in Religion, which must be granted to every one, if granted to *Luther*, *Calvin*, and the rest of the first Reformers: For they had no more Authority for what they did than any private Person whatever; of which *Luther* is very conscious, as is evident from his own Words. "How often, " *says he*, did my trembling Heart " beat within me, and reprehending " me, object against me, this most " valid Argument? Art Thou only wise? " do so many Worlds err? Were so many " always ignorant? What if thou erreſt, " and draweſt ſo many into Errors, to be " damn'd with thee eternally? Do'st Thou, " O ſole and insignificant Man, undertake " ſo great Matters? What if thou, being " but one, offendeſt? If God permits ſuch, " ſo many, nay all to err, Why may not he " permit thee to err? To this belong theſe  
" Argu-

## LETTERS, &c. 7

*“ Arguments, the Church, the Church;  
“ the Fathers, the Fathers; the Counsels;  
“ the Practices; the Multitudes, and  
“ Greatness of wise Men; Whom don’t  
“ these Mountains of Arguments, these  
“ Clouds, nay these Oceans of Examples  
“ confound? I wish I had never begun this  
“ Work: I wish that my Writings were burnt,  
“ or at least bury’d in eternal Oblivion.”*

These Words shew clearly that he had no Warrant for what he did, and that he had no Commission from God to reform the Church then in Being, and of which he then was but a private Member, and no Governour, and consequently had no Authority, unless by some immediate Commission from God, which he should have demonstrated by some Miracle, otherwise any one else may pretend an immediate Commission from God, and so mould the Church into what Shape and Figure they please. From hence it is evident upon what a sandy Foundation the Edifice of your New Church

## 8    *LETTERS, &c.*

Church is built : From hence it is likewise evident, that the first Reformers of the Church were in the Wrong, or else every one may reform the Church according to the Dictates of his private Reason, and so establish what Religion they think is according to Scripture, which must destroy the very Notion of a Church, which supposes a Society of Men by an Unity of Faith : But this Principle of the Reformation admits as many Churches as there are Faiths, and of as many Faiths as there are Men. I shall urge this Point no further at present, but leave it to your Consideration, and expect another Occasion to dilate on it, which I hope you will soon afford to, Sir,

*Your most Obedient Humble Servant,  
And Affectionate Brother,*

W O O D.

If you chance to see Mr. Dodd, as I believe you may, pray give my most humble Service.



*Whitelocke Bulstrode, Esq;*

T O

Doctor *W O O D.*

S I R,

12 March, 170<sup>8</sup>.

**I** Have the Favour of Yours of the 27th past, and shall answer it in the Order in which it is writ. I have discours'd with an old Courtier of ours, touching the Privileges of Physicians, and of other Freedoms which our Kings have indulged to their Servants when they Dine *incognito*. He tells me, that when our Princes go a Hunting, and travel or dine *incognito*, and their Physicians and other Servants

B

at-

10 *LETTERS, &c.*

attend them, that the Grooms of the Bed-Chamber dine with them, and private Gentlemen, but not the Gentlemen-Ushers, nor the Physicians: That the latter have a Table provided for them, of two or three Dishes of Meat. I am sorry for the Indisposition of Body my Father labours under; but some Disease or other does usher us all to the Grave. I pray God fit him and all of us for it. The Sword is a sad Employment. I'm sorry my Brothers must take to't, and that a Philosopher must reside in a Camp. *It must needs be that Offences come, but woe be to them by whom they come.* I congratulate the Welfare and Increase of your Family; may the Means of supporting the same be never wanting! I take not amiss what you offer on the Topick of Religion, and thank you for your Compliment: But I shou'd more admire, had I the Learning and Perspicuity you speak of, if I were of the *Roman* Com-

## LETTERS, &c. II

Communion, than you can do, that I am of the Reform'd.

I need not enter into the Detail wherein you and we differ (tho' I shall not decline that whenever you please ) but shew that we have Scripture, the only true Rule of Faith for our *Credenda* and *Agenda*, and that you have not the same for yours; I shall answer your Argument as you have drawn it up against our Reformation:

“ You say you admire I do not perceive the Weakness of the Principles of the Reformation; for the World must grant, that every particular Person has as much Right to Innovate or Reform as *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Hen. VIII.* *Queen Eliz.* or the Parliament of *England*. For if any of these may change what they in reason think fit in Religion, because their Reason tells them this or that Point is wrong, and not according to Scripture interpreted by right Reason; then You or I

B 2

may

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“ may change in Religion what we  
“ think wrong, because we have Reason as well as they. Then you  
“ say this way of proceeding, annihilates the Authority and Government  
“ of the Church, which cannot subsist without Government.

This is the Substance of your Argument, and what follows are Conclusions from these Premises.

Now I shall put the Sum of this Argument with all its Strength into a Proposition or two, and then shew its Weakness :

1. *The Catholick Church is the Roman Church, united under one Head the Bishop of Rome.*

2. *The Bishops and Pastors of the Roman Church, so united, can only Reform, or Amend, in Matters of Religion.*

*But the Church of England is not this Church, therefore they cannot Reform, or Amend, in Matters of Religion.*

I deny

## LETTERS, &c. 13

I deny both the Major and the Minor Propositions ; and I might justly put it upon you, that make the Exception, to shew that the *Roman Church* is the only true Church that can Reform in Matters of Religion what is amiss ; for you take that for granted, which we Protestants utterly deny : And to argue from Premises which we deny, without proving them, is, I think, no very fair Way of Reasoning.

The Word *Church* in Scripture hath two Acceptations.

The one a Number of Christian People met together to serve God, as greet the *Church* in their House, i. e. of *Aquila* and *Priscilla*. (a)

The other, the Faithful and Dispers'd throughout the whole Earth, knit together in one Faith, under one Head, *Christ Jesus*. (b)

B 3

Now

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(a) *Rom.* xvi. 5.    *Colos.* iv. 15.    (b) *Ephes.* iv. 4,  
5, 6. 12, 13.    *Colos.* xi. 19.    *Eph.* i. 22, 23.

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Now if these two Acceprations are the only Sense of the Word *Church* in Scripture Language, it seems to me a Piece of Arrogance in the Church of *Rome* to call her self the *Catholick Apostolick Roman Church*, besides the Absurdity of *Roman* and *Catholick*. I do agree, she is a Part of the Christian Church, tho' a corrupt One; but she is no more the *Catholick Church* because she calls her self so, than I shou'd be the wisest Man in the World if I had the Impudence to call my self so. Thus much for the Major Proposition.

As for the Minor, the Downfall of the First will bring the Second with it. For if the Church of *Rome* is not the Universal Church, then the Pope Bishops, and Pastors of that Church, cannot pretend to Reform or Govern any further, or more extensively than the Limits of her Jurisdiction reach. Usurpations create no Right; they were thrown off from *England* long before the

## LETTERS, &c. 15

the Reformation. We had no need of asking her to Reform the Errors and Abuses that had crept into our Part of the Christian Church. Any Body of Christians, that were under a Form of Government, had Reason enough to Reform what they found repugnant to Holy Writ, which is the only Rule of Faith. The Churches of *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, &c.* have err'd, and so hath the Church of *Rome*, and still continues so to do, if the Word of God is to be believ'd.

As for *Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius*, and the rest of those who writ against the Errors of the *Roman* Church, they had indeed, as you say, no more Authority than you or I to Reform, nor do I pin my Faith on their Sleeves : But every Man that is a Lover of Truth, ought to oppose Error where he sees it ; and all honest Men ought to embrace Truth where they find it.

## 16 LETTERS, &c.

Our Reformation under *Edw. VI.* and Queen *Eliz.* was order'd with the greatest Decency and Universal Consent of the Prince, Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Representatives of the whole Body of the People; as Learned, a freer Body, and more Universal than the Synod of *Trent*, for I cannot call it a General Council.

The Papists communicated with us 'till about the 11th Year of Queen *Eliz.* therefore our Communion you cannot say is unlawful; and you had (all in *England*) been Reform'd had that Communion continu'd which was interdicted by the then regnant Pope; so that you separated from our Communion, not we from yours. And if a Nation hath not Power to Reform what is amiss, either in Church or State, farewell all Government and Authority: If my House were on Fire I wou'd certainly quench it if I cou'd, whether *Socrates* wou'd consent to it or not;

not; abundantly more I cou'd offer to justifie our Reformation, but you having only insisted on the Weakness (as you call it) of the Principles of our Reformation, as suppos'd to be done without Authority: I hope I have given you Satisfaction as to that Point: The Sum of what I have said may be resolv'd into these Propositions.

1<sup>st</sup>, That the Church of Rome is not the Catholick Church exclusive of others, but only a Part of it.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That every Part of the Catholick Church may Reform the Abuses and Errors crept into it, without staying for the Consent of other Parts of the Catholick Church.

3<sup>dly</sup>, That every private Man may, and ought to expose Error decently where he sees it.

4<sup>thly</sup>, That every honest Man ought to embrace Truth wherever he finds it.

5<sup>thly</sup>,

## 18 LETTERS, &c.

5thly, That the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith, and that they are sufficient for Salvation.

I hope no Expression I have used hath given you Offence, which perhaps thro' a Zeal for Truth may have escap'd my Pen. I have Charity for all Men, but for you especially, to whom I have the Honour to be related; and hope, however we may differ in the Matters of Religion here, we shall both of us agree in the Kingdom of Heaven; which I pray God grant. I am, &c.

*Whitelocke Bulstrode.*

Pray make my Duty and Service acceptable to my Father and Mother, and Sisters and Brother.



Doctor



Doctor W O O D

T O

*Whitelocke Bulstrode, Esq;*

*May 20, 1709.*

**I** Thank you, Sir, very kindly for Yours, dated the 12th of *March*, by which I find you are not a little astonish'd at my supposing the *Roman* Church to be the Catholick Church; but if you had reflected both on its Antiquity and Universality, I believe your Astonishment wou'd have been much less. For if you wou'd be pleas'd to consider  
how

## 20 *LETTERS, &c.*

how this Church has continued by an uninterrupted Succession from St. *Peter's* Time to our Days, and how its Doctrine hath ever been profess'd wherever the Christian Faith hath been preach'd, you cou'd not reasonably doubt of the Catholicity of its Doctrines, both as to Time and Place; both which are requisite to make a Church Catholick: Because that if a Church be deficient in either of these, it cou'd not be Catholick, and consequently not the true Church in which we profess to believe in our Creed. For if it be not Catholick in Time, that is, if it has not continued from our Saviour's Time to ours, it cou'd not preach and teach at all times, to all Nations, the true Faith; and consequently Millions of People must be lost during that time, for want of knowing the true Faith; which, as the Scripture tells us, must come by Hearing.

Now

Now how shall Persons hear the true Faith, if there be none sent to Teach and Preach it to them? And who shall send these Preachers and Teachers in the Time in which the Church exists not? Consequently there is an absolute Necessity of the true Churches Perpetuity.

As to the other Part, it is certain that the true Church must be Catholick not only in Time but in Place ; because the true Faith being divulg'd by the Twelve Apostles, who went into different Quarters of the World, it must necessarily follow, that they all teaching the same Doctrines, their Doctrines must be Catholick in Place and Time : Whereas the Doctrine of any Heretick being taught by one Man alone, cou'd not be so diffus'd as the Doctrine of the Apostles, but must spread by little and little. Thus *Arius* infected the greatest Part of the *East*, and *Pelagius* the *West*, by degrees ; but tho' they had spread ten times

## 22 LETTERS, &c.

times more than they did, yet that wou'd never have made their Doctrines Catholick ; because that there was a Time in which these Doctrines were unknown, being only taught where they and their Disciples went ; so that St. *Augustine* observes the Tracing of an Heresie to its Beginning is a Refutation of it. What I allege here against the *Arians* and *Pelagians* has the same Force against the *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, and other Modern Innovators.

Now can you think it strange that I shou'd take that Church to be the Catholick Church that has existed in all Ages since Christ's Time, and in all Places wherever Christianity hath been taught, and which alone existed at the Time of the Reformation ? Its sole Existence, at that Time, is sufficient to prove it to be the Catholick Church ; because that there was no other Church then existing but it, it must necessarily follow, that the *Roman* Catholick Church is the Catholick Church,

Church, or that the Catholick Church must have fail'd then. To allege that the *Greek* or *Armenian* Churches were in Being, is as much as to say, that the *Gallican* or *Spanish* Churches were then in Being; because that those Churches profess the same Doctrines as the *Roman* Catholick and Apostolick Churches did, of which they were as much a Part as the *Gallican* and *Spanish* Churches are at present: For they professing but one Faith, constituted but one Church, which was call'd the *Roman Catholick Church*, even by St. *Augustine*. This Epithet was added, not to confine the Church to *Rome* or *Italy*, but to distinguish the true Church from false Churches, which usurp'd the Name of Catholick. For as in the Infancy of the Church there were false Christians, who under that Name seduced the true ones, which the Apostles perceiving, call'd a Council at *Jerusalem*, in which the Word Catholick was added to the Word Church,

## 24 LETTERS, &c.

Church, to distinguish the true Church from the false : So in latter Times, the Word *Roman* was added to the Catholick Church, to distinguish it from those Churches which were not so, and which had usurp'd that Name to conceal their Errors and Innovations.

This I think sufficient to evince, that the *Roman* Catholick Church is the true Church of God, and that its Head and Pastors are the Governours of it, and consequently that those who left it upon what Pretence soever were Hereticks ; for they being only private Members of the Church had no other Authority for what they did but their own private Fancy, or Scripture at the best, interpreted according to their Fancy, which is no Authority, and which indeed annihilates all Authority, as I have said in my first. For if *Luther* or *Calvin* might leave the *Roman* Catholick Church out of Pretence of Re-forming its Errors, of which they were only

only private Members; then may the Quakers or Presbyterians, by the same Rule, Reform the Church of *England*, and you and I them; and so the Reformation may go on, *ad infinitum*, there being no Authority to stop it, the Authority of the Catholick Church being once destroy'd. What better Plea can *Arius* and *Socinus* have for denying the Divinity of Christ, than saying this Doctrine is not according to the Scripture? Or what can the Anabaptists desire more for not baptizing Infants? Your asserting that every one that is a Lover of Truth, ought to oppose Errors wherever they see them, and embrace Truth wherever they find it, is very just, but very hard to be determin'd. For what is Error, and what is Truth, is the Question in Dispute: And if you think that the *Roman* Church had Errors, and that the first Reformers oppos'd 'em, and adhered to the Truth, you beg the Question. To illustrate this Matter,

C

you

## 26 LETTERS, &c.

you bring in a Comparison of your House ; which if it shou'd be on Fire, you wou'd quench it whether *Socrates* would consent to it or not. And you wou'd be very much in the Right, tho' your Parity in the Comparison is very much in the Wrong ; because your House being on Fire is a thing evident to the Sense, but the Articles of our Faith, and the true Sense of Scripture, are not so: For our main Difficulty is to know the Truth, and the Rule which our Saviour hath left us to know. Now you tell me that the Scripture is the only Rule of Faith, and consequently the only Means by which we can come to know the Truth.

To this I answer in the Negative : *First*, Because that it is *De Fide* to believe the Scripture to be the reveal'd Word of God. Now the Scripture can't be a Rule to us to believe it ; for it can't bear Testimony for it self, therefore your Rule is defective in this Point,

## LETTERS, &c. 27

Point, which makes the whole Edifice of your Faith fall to the Ground, it having no other Support.

This is judiciously observed by one of your own Doctors; It is not the Word of God, *says he*, that doth or can possibly assure us, that we do well to think it the Word of God. The first outward Motion, leading Men so to esteem the Scripture, is the Authority of God's \* Church, which teacheth us to receive *Mark's Gospel*, who was not an Apostle, and to reject the Gospel of *St. Thomas* who was; to retain *St. Luke's*, who saw not Christ, and to reject *Nicodemus* who saw him.

Secondly, If the Scripture be the Rule of Faith, I would fain know, whether you mean the whole Scripture, or any one Part of it. If the Whole, then the Rule must be imperfect:

C 2

For

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\* *Dr. Covell's Defence of Hooker.*

## 28 *LETTERS, &c.*

For it is most certain that we have not the Whole ; for Instance, we have not *St. Thomas's* Gospel pure and intire ; therefore it is not counted Canonical : So likewise we have not several other Writings of the Apostles. If Part of the Scripture be sufficient, by what Rule shall we know which is that Part ? For neither our Saviour, nor the Apostles have told us which is that Part ; neither have they told us in any Part of the Scripture, that it was to be our Rule of Faith.

3<sup>dly</sup>, The Rule of Faith ought to be so in all times since the Faith has been declar'd, for else Men must have been lost in that time when this Rule was not in being : But the Scriptures before the Council of *Nice* were not declar'd, which were Orthodox, and which not ; and therefore before that Council they could be no Rule, and consequently Men must then be lost for want of a Rule of Faith.

4<sup>thly</sup>,

4thly, Since that all Men have a Soul to be sav'd, Illiterate as well as Literate, which they must effect by having a true Faith, it doth necessarily follow, that the Rule of Faith must be applicable as well to the Capacity of the one as the other ; otherwise the Illiterate wou'd have just Reason to complain of Providence's dealing hardly with them, who had given the Learned a Means to save their Souls, but had given *them* none, or at least one as good as none, since they were incapable of making use of it.

Now I may reasonably conclude, that in the Primitive Times of Christianity, three Parts of four of the Christian World could not read, and consequently were depriv'd of the Rule of Faith.

5thly, Supposing that they could read, cou'd they read and understand *Greek* and *Hebrew*, in which the Scripture was originally writ? For those who cou'd not, must rely on Translations;

# 30 LETTERS, &c.

flations; which if faulty, their Faith must be so too.

6thly, Supposing they did all understand those Languages, yet what Certainty had they then, or we now, of the Scripture being exactly copy'd, so that there were no Mistakes committed by those who transcrib'd it? For I don't doubt but that you believe that the Originals were not in the Hands of every Christian: So that not only the Unlearn'd, but the Learn'd also wou'd be at a very great Loss for the Certainty of their Faith. For how can they be certain of their Faith when they are not certain of the Scriptures being exactly transcrib'd? This now is but too evident from the various Lections of Scripture, which the Learned Bishop *Usher* was very sensible of.

He, in a Sermon preach'd before King *James* or King *Charles* I. (which of the two I don't well remember) said, that he had made a Collection  
of

of the various Lections of the New Testament, which were so numerous and so different, that he durst not publish them for fear of Invalidating the Authority of that Book.

Now sure when you reflect on these Difficulties, you must own that to follow your Rule of Faith, is to plunge one's self into an Ocean of Doubts in quest after Faith which admits of no Doubt.

7thly, Let us suppose that all Christians were so learned as to understand *Greek* and *Hebrew*, and that the Copies of the Scriptures were exactly transcrib'd, yet what Certainty has any particular Person that he rightly understands the Scripture, and that he does not wrest them to his own Destruction, as the Scripture forewarns us? For he may very well be mistaken in the Sense of Scripture, and so the Person doth not believe the Scripture, but only what he imagines to be the Meaning of Scripture.

## 32      *LETTERS, &c.*

Now, pray Sir, tell me ingenuously, whether a Faith grounded on such, or so many Uncertainties, can be firm and without wavering? And whether they are not sufficient to make one a Sceptick in Religion?

Now since this Rule of yours does not hold, and since there are such Diversities of Churches, and Diversities of Faiths, my next Inquiry shall be to find out what Course a prudent Man ought to steer in Search of the true Faith. *Hic labor hoc opus est.* Now lest you shou'd call in question my Advice, I shall give you the Advice of one of your own Doctors. Seeing, says he, that the Controversies of \* Religion are so intricate, that few have Time and Leisure, and fewer yet, Strength of Understanding to examine them, what remains for Men desirous of Satisfaction in these things of such Consequence, but  
diligently

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\* Dr. Tenison in his Preface to his Treatise of the Church.

## LETTERS, &c. 33

*diligently to search out amongst all the Societies of Men in the World, which is the blessed Company of the Holy One, that Household of Faith, that Spouse of Christ and the Church of the Living God, which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, that so they may embrace her Communion, follow her Directions, and rest in her Judgment?*

Now here you see one of your own Party judiciously advises you to find out the true Church, which is to be your Guide and Rule in Faith: But perchance you will here ask me, if you must pin your Faith upon her Sleeve, and believe her when she contradicts the Scripture, or at least appears to you to do so? Yes, certainly.

For if you believe her in telling you what Parts of the Scripture are Canonical, and what not, why not believe her as to the Sense of Scripture? Since it tells you that she is the Pillar and Foundation of Truth, and that the

Gates

## 34    *LETTERS, &c.*

Gates of Hell shou'd never prevail against her ; and since that our Saviour said, *whosoever hears you* (that is his Disciples who were then the Church) *hears me*, and that he wou'd send the Holy Ghost to guide them in all Truth?

Are not these sufficient Warrants for you and me to believe her as to the Sense of Scripture before our selves, and to rely on her Authority, which is Divine, before any other whatsoever, and not to believe what private Persons have said to defame her, I mean the late Reformers of the Church, who pretend that Errors have crept into her, and corrupted her, tho' the Scripture tells us point-blank the contrary, that \* she is glorious, and without Wrinkle, and that she is irreprehensible? For my part I can't see any Reason to question the Churches Veracity

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\* *Eph. v. 25, 26.*

racity in the Sense of the Scripture, since that it is acknowledg'd in telling us what is Scripture.

This Mr. *Fulk* thinks very reasonable, who in his Answer to a Counterfeit Catholick says, *That the Church has Judgment to discern true Writings from false ones, and the Word of God from the Word of \* Men; and this Judgment she has not from her self, but from the Holy Ghost, p. 5.*

Now tho' you may think this Consequence not good, yet there have been learned Protestants who have approv'd of it. † Undoubtedly, says one, *the Primitive Church receiv'd from the Apostles and Apostolical Men not only the Texts of Scripture, but also the true and genuine Interpretation of it. The Holy Ghost, says another, who presides over the Church is the true Interpreter of the Scri-*

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\* Clemnitius's *Exam. Part 1. 7. 4.*

† Seravia *Def. Tract. p. 3.*

## 36 LETTERS, &c.

*Scriptures, from whom the Interpretation is to be sought for.* Now is it Prudence for either you or me to leave the true Church which God has promis'd to conduct with his Spirit, to follow our Opinions, tho' we are zealous Lovers of Truth, only because *we* think that such and such Doctrines taught by the Church are not according to Scripture? No, surely. And why? Because that God has not promis'd his Spirit to conduct either you or me, or any other Doctor of the Church in all Truth, as he has promis'd his Church. Therefore in common Sense and Prudence, we ought to submit our Judgment to the Church in all Points, notwithstanding that they appear to contradict the Scripture: For to suppose that the Church has, or can err, is to suppose that God has, or can fail of making good his Promise. To allege that the Churches of *Antioch, Alexandria, or Jerusalem* have fail'd, is not to the Purpose. For it is certain, that

that they were but particular Branches of the Church, as are the *Spanish* and the *Gallican* at present, which we own may fail; but this is no Argument that the Catholick Church, of which we are now speaking, has or can fail. So that the only thing which one desirous to know the Truth, and to secure his Salvation, by a true Faith, has to do, is to find out the true Church, out of which there is no Salvation.

*Quicumq; vult salvus esse (says St. Athanasius in his Creed) ante omnia opus est ut teneat Catholicam Fidem, quam nisi quisq; integram inviolatamq; servaverit absq; dubio in eternum peribit.*

Now where can we hope to find this Catholick Faith but in the Catholick Church? And where this Catholick Church but in that Church which is Catholick in *Unity*, Catholick in *Time*, and Catholick in *Place*?

Now

## 38    *LETTERS, &c.*

Now it is in vain for us to hunt after this *Unity*, this *Antiquity*, and this *Universality* out of the *Roman Catholick Church*, which is one and the same in all Countries wherever it is diffus'd, and which has existed so ever since our Saviour's Time ; when as all the Reformed Churches don't only differ from the *Roman Catholick Church* but from one another ; and consequently can't have only any *Unity* with ours, but with one another : Nay, further, let us suppose that they have this *Unity* with one another, yet how can they pretend to have existed from our Saviour's Time, since that before *Luther's Time*, there is not a Word of any such Religion, either in the Ecclesiastick or Secular Writings.

Therefore, as I said in the Beginning of this Letter, so I continue to assert, that either our Church must be the true Catholick and Apostolick Church, or that God's Church must  
have

have fail'd, as many Protestants affirm it has, who saw the Necessity of granting either the one or the other.

Perchance, Sir, you may think that unless I answer your Syllogism in Form, I don't answer your Letter: Wherefore, to remove this Objection, I will repeat it, and answer it.

1. The Catholick Church is the *Roman* Church, united under one Head, the Bishop of *Rome*.

2. The Bishop and Pastors of the *Roman* Church, so united, can only Reform or Amend in Matters of Religion.

3. But the Church of *England* is not this Church, and therefore it cannot Reform in Matters of Religion.

4. I answer to the Major first, that you ought to have said that the *Roman* Church diffus'd; otherwise you may under-

40 *LETTERS, &c.*

understand by it the Churches contain'd in *Rome*, or the Diocese of *Rome*, which is only a Part of the Catholick Church, as I have already said. Now the Verity of the Major thus explain'd is proved evidently by the beginning and latter Part of my Letter, if you understand by Matters in Religion, Doctrines in Religion. For as to other Matters which regard the Discipline, it is most certain, that not only any Nation, but any Bishop may correct the Abuses within his own Jurisdiction. But if you mean by Matters in Religion, the *Doctrines of the Catholick Church*, it is certain that no Nation nor Bishop, much less any private Person can correct Doctrinal Matters in Religion ; because that it belongs only to the Catholick Church, to judge or decide in Matters of Doctrine. Therefore it is most certain that the first Reformers could not pretend to correct those Matters in Religion which they

LETTERS, &c. 41

they call'd Errors and Abuses, they being Matters of Doctrine, which belong'd only to the *Roman* Catholick Church, either diffus'd or collected, to be Judges of

The Verity of the Minor is demonstratively deduced from what has been said, viz.

The Bishop and Pastors of the Roman Catholick Church, so united, can only Reform or Amend in Doctrinal Matters of Religion.

I confess, any particular Church may Reform it self so far as it finds it self to have deviated from the Doctrines and Discipline of the Catholick Church in Being: But to think that it can Change or Reform the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, is to suppose that God, contrary to his Word, has permitted his Church to err, is to annul the Authority of the Church, and is to allow a Power to each particular Person, of framing what

sort of Religion best pleases his Fancy.

It was upon this Principle that the Reformation first began ; and it was upon this Principle that other Sectaries, with very just Reason, did, and do pretend to Reform *your Church* : For it is most certain that they had as much Right to Reform you, as you had to Reform us.

I find, Sir, by yours, that you have only read the Controvertists on your Side, therefore permit me to recommend two Books to you which treat of this Matter : The one is call'd *The Question of Questions*, writ by one Mumford of the Society of Jesus : This is a late Author. The other is *The Protestant Apology for the Catholick Religion*, writ by one Brerely a Priest, and Dedicated to King *James I.* I believe that either of these Books will give you more ample Satisfaction

*LETTERS, &c.* 43

ction than I can : But if you fail  
of finding them, or they fail of  
satisfying you, you need but con-  
tinue your Letters, and you shall  
always find me in this Matter, or  
any other, to be

*Your most Obedient*

*Humble Servant,*

*And Affectionate Brother,*

W O O D.



D 2 *Whitelocke*





*Whitelocke Bulstrode, Esq;*

T O

Doctor *W O O D.*

S I R,

21 June, 1709.



OUR Letter of the 20th of the last Month came to my Hands in so busie a Time, that I had but just Leisure to read it ; and I have been so engaged ever since with my publick and private Affairs, that I have wanted Time (but not Inclination or Respect) to answer it sooner.

I thought I had given you Satisfaction in my former, touching the Notion of a Church, or the Church,

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and

# 46 LETTERS, &c.

and in what Sense the Scripture has used that Word: But I perceive you are so attach'd to the old Argument, long since answer'd, of the Universality and Antiquity of the *Romish* Church, that I must be forc'd against my Will to say something to it again.

It looks very wonderful in a Man of your Learning to think that the *Roman* Church must needs be the Catholick Church; and whatever is apply'd to the Catholick Church must be intended of the *Roman*. We have great Regard to the Judgment of the Catholick Church of the three first Centuries; her Rule of Faith and Creeds we believe, and they were the Terms of Communion with her: But the Creed of Pope *Pius IV.* added to the *Nicene*, we have just Cause to reject; as amongst others, *That in the Mass there is offered a true, proper, and propitiatory Sacrifice for the Quick*

## LETTERS, &c. 47

Quick and Dead. 2. Transubstantiation. 3. Communion in one Kind. 4. Purgatory. 5. Invocation and Worshipping of Saints. 6. The Veneration of Relicks. 7. Worshipping of Images. These are Innovations in the *Romish* Church, which the Primitive Church knew nothing of. And altho' I do admit these Additions were to be found in the *Romish* Church before the Days of Pope Pius IV. and shou'd farther admit that it cannot be shewn in what particular Year these Corruptions entered the *Romish* Church; yet if these Doctrines were not taught by the Church in the three first Centuries, the Belief of these was no Condition of Communion then. How can your *Roman* Church, with any Colour or Appearance of Reason make these new Articles the Term of Communion, and damn all that are not of her Communion, when the Primitive and True Catholick

## 48 *LETTERS, &c.*

Church did not do so? Your Church narrows the Way to Heaven, and lays Burthens, such as our Forefathers knew nothing of; and, as in the Corruption of the *Jewish* Church in our Saviour's Time, add the Inventions of Men for the Doctrines of Christ. Were the Tares that grew up with the Wheat ever the less Tares because the good Man could not tell at what time the Enemy sow'd 'em? I have look'd into your Book of the *Question of Questions*, and find your Arguments about believing what the Church imposes to believe, rather than what the Word of God requires, to be taken in a great measure from thence. The principal Reasons whereof are, that the Church defin'd what Books were Canonical; that few Men understood *Hebrew* or *Greek*, that many Translations have Errors; therefore the *Roman* Church must help these Defects, &c. and to be credited.

credited. As to the first the Church defin'd what Books were Canonical, whence you infer the same Power that defined must construe and expound: To make this Rule have any tolerable Weight, you ought to shew, that the same Body of Men that first settled the Canon of Scripture, gave it this Construction; and not another Sett of Men, born 1200 Years after them; but besides, granting they were the same Men, if one shou'd tell me of a Mine of Gold, and shew me the Way to it, and assign the very Place; and I, upon View and Judgment, find it to be but Silver, and tell him, Sir, you are mistaken; what you inform'd me to be Gold is but Silver, the Colour and Weight plainly makes it appear so; and I have my Senses and Understanding as well as you, and they are to be the Rule of my Judgment. No, Sir, replies the *Roman*, you cou'd  
not

# 50 LETTERS, &c.

not tell there was any Mine here 'till I inform'd you ; and I that inform'd you first of it, am the true Judge ; you must believe me and not your Senses ; your Senses are fallible, but I that found out the Mine am infallible. Is this a fair Way of Reasoning ? And yet your Argument is just the same. I know you'll reply, the Church has the Promise of Christ, that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. I grant it ; but then it is the Christian Universal Church, and not the Church of *Rome* ; for she may err, and so may the Church of *Geneva*, but not the whole Body of Christians. There were seven Thousand of the true Church in the Time of *Ahab*, when *Elias* thought there were none but himself left. As to the Second, that few Men understand *Hebrew* or *Greek*, and must trust to Translations that are subject to Errors ; Have not we your Translations

## LETTERS, &c. 51

flations as well as our own? Can't we compare them together? Do not we bind up the Apocryphal Books with those of the Canon in our Bibles? Cannot we read them as well as the other? We read them for Instruction, but not to settle a Point of Faith; because they were not inserted in the first Canon by the Church, nor found in the Original Languages, &c. nor are consonant in many Places to the undoubted Books of Scripture.

. You magnifie much some Metaphorical Expressions of St. Paul, touching the Church, of its being the Pillar and Ground of Truth, that she is all glorious, &c. and then presently apply these Expressions and Descriptions to the Roman Church, as if no Man can describe a good \* Pastor, but presently it must be the Pope.

This

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\* 1st Epist. Tim. c. iii. v. 15.

## 52 LETTERS, &c.

This is according to a Maxim in our Law, ---- *Uno absurdo dato mille sequuntur*. Might not these Enconiums relate to the two Senses of the Word Church, which I have mentioned in my former, viz. either to the Christians that used to meet to adore God in some particular Place, and profess'd their Faith in Christ so gloriously, that they courted Martyrdom rather than avoid it; that glorified God for giving them the Honour and Privilege to suffer for the sake of the Lord: Or in the more general Sense, of the Christian Faith shining thro' all the Parts of the World by the holy and bright Lives of the Confessors and Martyrs? And thus it is now in both Senses in many Parts of the World, whereby the Promise of Christ to his Church, that is his People, is verifi'd, that the Gates of Hell, *i. e.* the Power of Satan should

## LETTERS, &c. 53

should not prevail against it ; tho' it hath sunk in some Places it hath arose in others.

The pure Christian Religion had its Professors, who rejected the Errors of the *Roman Church* long before *Luther*, and who were persecuted for the same ; witness the *Lollards* with us in *England*, whose Doctrine may be collected from the Oaths of Abjuration required from them, which was, to express it in the Words of the Oath in our Old *English* thus: *That from this Day forward, I will worship Images with praying unto them in the Worship of Saints, that they be made Offer, and also I shall never despise Pilgrimages.*

This was about the Year 1315, long before *Luther*, whose Doctrine appears by the Renunciation to be against Worshipping of Images, and Pilgrimages, and other Errors of the *Roman Church*, which we  
of

## 54 LETTERS, &c.

of the Church of *England* likewise reject. You are totally against private Judgment, and bid us put out our own Eyes, and see with the Eyes of the Church, as you call it, *i. e.* the Council of *Trent*, &c. for she cannot err. But, I pray, must not we use our own Eyes to look for and find out the Church of *Rome*? Must not I use my own private Judgment to find out that Church? And if I must use it in one Particular, *viz.* to find out the true Church (as you call it) why not when I have found it out? Were not the *Bereans* commended for searching the Scripture, to see whether the things *St. Paul* said were true or not? He appeal'd to the Old Testament to prove that *Jesus* was the Messiah; for that the Prophecies of the Messiah were entirely fulfill'd in our Lord; and yet he had infinitely more Reason and Authority than

than the Pope or *Roman* Church hath, to require their Assent to his Doctrine upon his bare Word. For *First* he was a Man of great Humane Learning, and wonderful Wit. *2dly*, He was an honest Man. *3dly*, He was enlightned with the Holy Spirit, as to Knowledge, Utterance, and the Gift of Tongues. *4thly*, He had the Gift of doing Miracles. Now a Holy Life, accompany'd with the Gift of Miracles, one wou'd think were Authority enough to command an Assent to any Doctrine that is not repugnant to our first Principles of Reason, which that of our Saviour is not; and yet he appeals to Scripture for Credit. You set up Tradition equal to Scripture; Oh fond and absurd Fancy! There is scarce a Fact done Yesterday, seen by three People, but when related by them the next Day, but what will have some material Difference in telling it. How  
do

## 56 LETTERS, &c.

do the best Historians vary in their relating Facts in one Century that were done in the preceding? Does not \* St. John tell us, *There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the World it self could not contain the Books that should be written.* Now granting this Expression to be an Hyperbole, yet doubtless what our Saviour said and did, which were unwritten, were infinitely more than what were written. And yet what Expression or Fact have we of our Saviour not contain'd in the Canon of the Scripture, that Tradition hath delivered, that any Man of tolerable Sense, even of your own Church, gives a Credit to? Who gives Credit to the Epistle of *Agbarus* to our Saviour? Or of our Saviour's Answer to him again, with

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\* St. John c. last, v. last.

with forty other such like Stories delivered by *Eusebius*? And yet this is an Author of good Credit.

Now as to all wherein you and we differ, you fly to the poor *Asylum* of Tradition for to justify and maintain. Had not the *Jews* Tradition for all the Superstructures they added to the Law? How fonder were they of the Traditions of their Fathers than of the Commands of God? Did they not reprove even our Saviour for suffering his Disciples to transgress the Tradition of the Elders by eating with unwashen Hands, *Mark* vii. 1, 5. But lo! the Answer which he gave them! *In vain do these People worship me, teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of Men. For laying aside the Commandments of God, ye hold the Tradition of Men, as washing of Pots and Cups, &c.* What can be more ridiculous in the World than the *Corban* of the

E Jews,

# 58 LETTERS, &c.

*Jews*, and yet that was their Tradition? What Sense can there be in your Pilgrimages, in going some Hundreds of Miles to see the Tomb or the Bones of an old Woman, whom your foolish People pray to, when peradventure she is gone to the wrong Place? But if perchance to the Right, before she died had lost her Hearing, yet can now hear you when dead, ten thousand Miles off. What means your Processions with Wax-Candles when the Sun or Moon shine ever so bright, and you know the Way ever so well? Can an Infinite Wise God be pleased with these Fopperies? But some of your great Men say that the Saints see all things in God; a pretty Jargon! see all things in God! --- Therefore they can hear the Supplications made to them. You make the Organ of Sight to do the Office of the Organ of Hearing. But he that can believe  
 Tran-

# LETTERS, &c. 59

Transubstantiation, hath a Throat wide enough to swallow any Pill. Most of our Saviour's Expressions were metaphorical, and allusive either to the present Occasion, or to some Custom or Usage amongst the *Jews*. *E. g.* When our Lord saw *Peter* and *Andrew*, two Fishermen, casting their Nets into the Sea he call'd them, saying, *Follow me, and I will make you Fishers of Men*. When he ask'd Water of the Woman of *Samaria*, who hesitated to give him any, our Saviour reply'd, *If you had known the Gift of God, and who it was that demanded Drink of thee, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living Water*. Here our Saviour calls the Spirit Water, because Water was mention'd before, tho' in other Places of Scripture the Spirit is call'd Fire, as an *Antithesis* to Water. Now if you consider the Lord's Supper, and the Manner of

# 60 LETTERS, &c.

eating the Paschal Lamb, and the Custom amongst the *Jews* of eating Bread, or drinking a Glas or Cup of Wine, both before and after their Meals, you will easily see that there is no room for Transubstantiation in that Supper. Our Lord comply'd with the lawful Customs of the *Jews*, and especially in this of the Passover, which was a Type of his Majesty. For as the Paschal Lamb was eaten yearly in Remembrance of the Deliverance of the *Jews* from *Egyptian* Bondage, so the Lord's Supper was to be eaten and drank in Remembrance of our Deliverance from the Power of Satan, and the Chain of our Sins, which was worse than *Egyptian* Slavery.

The Commemoration of this cou'd not but be with great Gratitude, when we consider who suffer'd for us, and what, and the Benefits we receive thereby. The *Jews* before their Meals had this Custom : The  
Master

## LETTERS, &c. 61

Master of the Feast took Bread and blessed it, saying, *Blessed be God for his Blessings on the Earth, that hath brought forth Bread that strengthens Mens Hearts ; and then gave to the Guests some Bread to eat :* Afterwards he blessed God for the Fruit of the Vine, which makes Man have a cheerful Countenance, and then the Cup went round, and after Meals the Bread, & *poculum charitatis*, went about again with the same Benediction, lest some Expressions of Heat might have past, so this was to reconcile all such Matters.

Now this being the Custom of the *Jews*, our Saviour to carry this Moral Custom on to a higher and nobler Purpose, institutes in the Room of these two Customs, his Supper : So that as the *Jews* annually were with Gratitude to remember their Deliverance out

62 *LETTERS, &c.*

of *Egypt*, so we Christians should frequently remember the Love of our Lord in laying down his Life for us. And as the *Jews* were wont at their Entertainments to bless God for their Bread and Wine his Majesty gave them, so we Christians should bless God for the giving his Son to die for us, and our Saviour for laying down his Life for us. For all great Actions had some Institutions to perpetuate their Memory. Thus the Primitive Christians in their *Agapæ*, or Love-Fests, always remembred our Lord's Death, *i. e.* in our Language receiv'd the Sacrament; and what can there be more required of us in this Supper, but gratefully to remember our great Benefactor as above; which when done with Sincerity, will necessarily oblige us to all the Acts of Love which an ingenuous

## LETTERS, &c. 63

ous Person can exert, and thence will follow an entire Obedience to his Commands; for whom we really love we will not disobey. What Occasion can be here now for Transubstantiation? Why, our Saviour has call'd the Bread his Body, and the Wine his Blood: But why must this be understood literally more than other figurative Expressions which all Men expound figuratively; as that our Lord calls himself a Door, a Vine, a Shepherd, a Corner Stone, &c. all which are Metaphors, and so understood? But does not Christ say that *except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you?* This Expression hath no Relation to the Sacrament, but the Occasion of it was thus: Christ having fed about five Thousand with five Loaves and two small

## 64 LETTERS, &c.

Fishes, passed over the Sea to Capernaum, whither the People that were fed, follow'd him; who addressing themselves to our Lord, he told them that they sought him not because of the Miracle, but because they did eat of the Loaves and were fill'd; and then tells them, *Labour not for the Meat which perisheth, but for the Meat which endureth to everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall give you*; (here our Saviour alluding to the Meat they had eaten, calls himself *Meat which endureth to eternal Life*) they said, *What shall we do that we may work the Works of God?* --- Jesus answered, --- *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* Now these People were so stupid, so incredulous, and so indocible, that notwithstanding the great Miracle he wrought before them  
the

# LETTERS, &c. 65

the Day before, in feeding them as above, they said unto him, *What Sign shewest thou that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?* As if our Lord had not prov'd sufficiently to them, that he was the Messiah by the Excellency of his Doctrine, and the Weight and Number of his Miracles. They went on and said, *Our Fathers did eat Manna in the Desert, as it is written, He gave them Bread from Heaven to eat:* Then Jesus said unto them, *Moses gave you not the Bread from Heaven, but my Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven: For the Bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World.* Here our Lord alluding to the Word Bread, which the Jews spoke of, calls himself *propter eminentiam*, the true Bread from Heaven. Then said they unto him, *Lord,*  
ever

## 66 LETTERS, &c.

*ever more give us this Bread :*  
 and *Jesus* said unto them, *I am*  
*the Bread of Life :* *He that*  
*cometh to me shall never hunger ;*  
*he that believeth on me shall*  
*never thirst, i. e. common Bread*  
*supports the Body but for a*  
*Time, and Hunger succeeds :*  
*But he that believes in Jesus*  
*shall be more supported in his*  
*Soul by that Faith, than the*  
*Body is by common Bread ; for*  
*that Faith shou'd be eternal*  
*Food to his Soul to endure for*  
*ever. Here our Saviour makes*  
*a Transition from natural Food,*  
*which they were too fond of,*  
*to spiritual Food which they*  
*did not regard. To take them*  
*off from their too much mind-*  
*ing this World, and tells them,*  
*Ye also have seen me and believed*  
*not, --- which is a plain Answer*  
*to their Question, --- What Sign*  
*shewest thou that we may see and*  
*be-*

## LETTERS, &c. 67

*believe thee? St. John vi. 30.*  
Then our Saviour goes on with the Prosecution of the same Metaphor (seeing their Infidelity) saying, *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give for the Life of the World is my Flesh.* The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, *How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat?*

The Infidel Jews contend with the Believing Jews touching this Expression; and the former being hardned (as Pharaoh at first hardned himself, and then God judicially hardned him more) our Lord advances the Metaphor somewhat higher, and said by a double Asseveration; *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life*

## 68 LETTERS, &c.

*Life in ye. Whoso eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, and I will raise him up at the last Day: For my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* Upon these Words the Infidel Jews that were so attach'd to the World left following our Saviour; tho' he was pleas'd, in great Condescension to their Stubborness and Infidelity before they left him, to tell them thus, --- *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing: The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life: As if he had said, How come you to be thus strangely mistaken? Can ye imagine that I speak literally unto you? Can you think that I am really Bread? Is there any such thing literally as living Bread?*

## LETTERS, &c. 69

Bread? Can Bread literally be Flesh? And as there can be no such thing literally as living Bread, or Bread literally at the same time be Flesh; so you may easily imagine that when I told you, that except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you; that this Expression was a Continuation of the same Metaphor, and to be taken in a spiritual Sense, and not in a literal: And so it appears, that St. Peter, and the rest of the believing *Jews* understood. I hope this will give you Satisfaction, that this relates not at all to the Sacrament; but if it did it is very plain (at least to me) that this Expression makes not at all *for*, but entirely *against* Transubstantiation; else what mean these Words, *The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit*

70 *LETTERS, &c.*

*Spirit and they are Life?* If all that our Saviour said were to be taken in a Literal, and not a Metaphorical or Spiritual Sense, then these last Words must not be Words,---but they must be Spirit and Life: Now how Words literally are Spirit and Life, I desire you'll inform me in your next: Besides it is the most absurd Doctrine that ever enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, and gives such an Offence to the Christian Religion, that your *Romish* Church can never atone for it: It makes some Men throw off the Christian Religion, and hinders others from embracing it. What would a judicious and learned Hea-then say, that coming from *China* into *Europe* should read the Institutes of *Moses*, and those of *Jesus Christ*, and finding the former to point at the later;  
and

*LETTERS, &c.* 71

and that those of our Lord are incomparably better than what all the Heathen Philosophers have collectively taught Mankind, with respect to the Duty we owe to God, to Man, and our selves, and even towards the inferior Nature, and yet shou'd find a Sett of Men calling themselves Christians, usurping Infallibility, damning all that are not of their Communion, and teaching at the same time, that a Priest saying a few Words over a Piece of Bread, or a Wafer, shou'd make that Bread or Wafer a God; and when he had so done, he shou'd first fall down, worship and adore him, and then eat him all up; and after that give him to five hundred People more, and they every one of 'em shou'd eat him all up likewise; and this done at a thousand Places at one and the same Time!

Wou'd

## 72 LETTERS, &c.

Wou'd not he say, if the Words the Priests saith makes the Bread a God, shew me the Change that is made of this Bread, after this Consecration? I'll shew you a Piece of Bread consecrated, and and another unconsecrated, and I believe the Pope himself, nor a General Council, the Pope presiding, will not be able to distinguish one from the other. Was not this Bread fit to make a Pudding before Consecration? And is it not fit to do so now, saving the Use to which it is dedicated: May not Vermin eat and consume it as well after as before Consecration, if it come in their Way? What! may a Mouse eat a God! This is as absurd a Doctrine and Practice as what \* *Isaiah* represents of  
the

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\* *Isaiah* 44.

# LETTERS, &c. 73

the sottish \* Jews touching their Idolatry in his Time: *They planted Trees, the Rains nourished them, they cut them down; with Part they made a Fire to warm themselves; with Part to Bake and Roast; with the Residue they made a God, and fell down and worship'd it, and pray'd to it, and said, deliver me for thou art my God: Then follows, They have not known nor understood; for he hath shut their Eyes that they cannot see, and their Hearts that they cannot understand, i. e. for a non-user of their Faculties; they forfeit and lose them, as appears by the subsequent Verse. Suppose one had been so barbarous as to cut off the Flesh from our Lord's Body, and to have eat it, and to have drank his Blood when he was in this World: Wou'd that,*

F d'ye

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\* *Isaiah* Cap. 44.

# 74 LETTERS, &c.

d'ye think, have been so meritorious an Act as to have saved him that did it in *the next*? Yet that wou'd have been eating his Flesh *indeed*, and drinking his Blood *indeed*, in a literal Sense, which your Church contends for. These and forty such gross Absurdities do follow from this Doctrine, which a wise Heathen wou'd most naturally infer: From thence he wou'd conclude, that the Precepts of the Gospel, with respect to their Morality, are admirable, but the *Credenda* absurd. I cou'd say a great deal more upon this Head, but this Doctrine is so absurd in it self that I'm weary of saying so much; nothing but an unhappy Education in the *Roman* Church, from Mens Infancy, cou'd prevail with them to admit this Doctrine. We suck in Errors, with our Mother's Milk. We are taught

taught when we are Children to be afraid of Bull-beggars ; and when we are Men, we can scarce throw off the *Idea*. Not one Man in a Thousand, or Woman in ten Thousand, can reject an erroneous Doctrine taught them in their Youth. We go on like Carriers Horses in the beaten and known Road, never examining whether there is not a better Way : We relish nothing but what we are used to ; few are so inquisitive and distinguishing ; few have such a Palate as to taste any thing that is not their daily Food ; and yet, alas ! this is not for want of Faculties. We have Powers and Abilities to do all this, to examine the Principles we were taught in our Youth, and to bring them, when of Age, to the Touchstone of Reason : 'Tis not for want of Faculties (for then we

76 *LETTERS, &c.*

shou'd be excusable) but for the *not using them*, that we continue in the erroneous Way we were taught: So that to God be the Glory, but to Man the Shame. I might run thro' the rest of the Articles establish'd in your *Trent* Synod, which are contrary to the Articles of Faith in the three first Centuries, and wherein we Protestants differ from you, and shew you the Reasons thereof; but this has been done by so many of our *English* Divines, that it is wholly needless.

Your adoring God in an unknown Tongue, is so great an Offence, and so expressly against Scripture, that cou'd I swallow all your new-invented, absurd Doctrines, I think I might lawfully separate from the *Roman* Church for that *only Cause*. As you have commended a Book or two to me, let me commend one  
to

LETTERS, &c. 77

to you; it has this Title, *The Corruptions of the Church of Rome, &c.* But I do assure you, what I have writ to you are my own genuine Thoughts; and that notwithstanding our Difference in Religion, I am, with much Sincerity,

Dear SIR,

*Your most Affectionate*

*Humble Servant,*

W. Bulstrode.

My Letter is too long already, even by this Way of answering yours; but if I had taken another Method, and answered the same Paragraph by Paragraph, it wou'd have been much longer, which caused me to chuse this Way.



Doctor *W O O D*

T O

*Whitelocke Bulstrode, Esq;*

**I** Received Yours, Sir, dated the 30th of *July*, which I wou'd have answer'd before, had I come sooner from the Campaign: It much surprized me; for instead of answering mine, which insisted on the Church, shewing the absolute Necessity of it, and the Uncertainty of our Faith without it, you run Divisions about Pilgrimages, Praying to the Saints, Transubstantiation, all which

LETTERS, &c. 79

which had nothing to do with the Question in Debate, letting drop two or three profane Witticisms, which are not fit to be repeated, much less refuted. Wherefore I shall pass by all in yours, that does not belong to the Question, and shall only take notice of what belongs to it, as being not proper to quit a Point before that it be cleared.

In Yours I find very few things that are to the Purpose: The first is, your Answer to all the Difficulties which I made to you about the Scripture, being the Rule of Faith, *viz.* That you having our Translations of the Bible, as well as your own, you cou'd compare them, and see how they agree, and so find out the Truth: But what Security have you, that the *Greek* Copies, from which both our Bible and yours were translated,

# 80 *L E T T E R S*, &c.

were true; and that nothing was omitted or added to them; or that even the Points were not changed, which alone is enough to change the Sense of the Text? Or how can you trust these Copies, since that you had them from our Church, which is a corrupted Church? Are not you afraid lest that corrupted Church shou'd insert corrupted Texts in the Scripture to favour its Corruptions, since that it has had the Scripture in its Custody for so many hundred Years? For my Part I don't see that you have the least Security for the *Greek* Copies, supposing that they are truly translated: Perchance you may tell me that these may be compared with other *Greek* Copies and Manuscripts, by which the Truth may be found out. But your learned Bishop *Usher* tells us quite another Story; for

*LETTERS, &c.* 81

for he says that he found the Lecti<sup>o</sup>ns so various, that he was afraid of publishing them, lest he shou<sup>d</sup> make the whole be questioned.

Now what a pretty Condition must a Person be in, who is to fish out his Faith out of these various Lecti<sup>o</sup>ns? I am afraid that you will find very few Persons capable of such a Work; and those who are may perchance find their Life too short for it: So that you see that this Answer falls short of what you intended it for, and much more for the other Difficulties which I instanced in my last about the Scripture being the Rule of Faith, and which therefore I shall not here repeat. You mistake me mightily, if you think that I am against the Use of our Reason in finding out the true Church, or in reading the Scripture. I  
am

82 *LETTERS, &c.*

am so far from such a Thought, that I know it is impossible to find out the Truth without Reason : But indeed I am not for our relying on our Reason preferably to the Catholick Church, or for putting it in Balance with its Authority, because God has promised to direct her in all Truth, so that the Gates of Hell may never prevail against her ; but he never promised so to assist *our Reason* ; and therefore when it has once found out which is the Catholick Church, it has nothing more to do, but to rest satisfied in *Her Judgment*, and follow her Directions, as *Dr. Field* tells us. Neither am I, as you think, for preferring Tradition before the Scripture ; but I am for making use of Tradition for the Interpretation of Scripture, and so I grant Scripture to be the Rule of Faith, that is Scripture  
as

## LETTERS, &c. 83

as interpreted by the Catholick Church, and not as it is intrepred by private Persons, which must destroy the Authority of the Church, and give an Inlet to all Opinions, let them be ever so extravagant, as I have already proved to you in my other Letters ; so that if we consult our Reason, it will tell us, that it is much more reasonable to believe the Catholick Church, which can't err in the Interpretation of the Scriptures, than our selves.

Since therefore we are both agreed that the Universal Christian Church can't err, is it not the shortest Cut for us both to find out this Church, and to see rather what she says of the Points in dispute, than to break our Brains about the Sense of Scripture, which we may very well mistake, but she can't.

Your Simile of a Mine of Gold

is

## 84 *LETTERS, &c.*

is like your House on Fire, which I answered in my last, which Answer serves for this here ; but since that you don't seem to comprehend it, I shall answer it again. You suppose that the Sense of Scripture is as evident as Gold is evidently different from Silver ; but there is no Parity betwixt these two ; for the one is the Object of Reason, and the other of Sense. Now the Sense of Scripture is not evident to our Senses, as Gold and Silver are ; but we must find it out by Dint of Reason, which is far from being certain in its Dictates. Next, had you an infallible Person to direct you in distinguishing Metals, as we have an infallible Authority, I believe that you wou'd trust him to distinguish the Metals rather than your self.

Wherefore the next Thing which we have to do is to find out this  
Catho-

## LETTERS, &c. 85

Catholick or Universal Christian Church, which you and all Protestants confess, as I think, to be infallible. Now, I say, that this Catholick Church must be either ours alone, or yours alone, or both joyn'd together, or else ours and yours, with all other Christian Societies; but yours alone can't be it, because it is neither Catholick in Time nor Place, for it has only existed since *Harry* the VIII's Time, and never extended it self beyond the King of *England's* Dominions. But perchance you may say that your Church is the same with ours, and that you have only Reformed its Errors; so that the same Church still exists in yours, only with this Difference, that it is now Reformed. If you think so, pray give me leave to ask you one Question; whether the Church that you pretend to Re-  
form

# 86    *LETTERS, &c.*

form was the Catholick Church? If it was, then first it is most certain that it cou'd never admit of Errors: Next I wou'd fain know by what Authority cou'd a few private Persons pretend to Reform or Judge her Doctrines?

I am sure if they cou'd, both you and I have the same Privilege, as I have already proved to you. Can you believe that our Saviour came down from Heaven to establish his Church upon such a weak or sandy Foundation, as to have it to be regulated by Scriptures, and it to be interpreted by particular Persons? Can you suppose that the *English* Government wou'd subsist long, notwithstanding the Goodness of the Laws, if they were left to be interpreted by particular Persons? Or don't you believe that from such a Principle, nothing wou'd result  
but

but Divisions and intestine Discords, instead of Unity and Peace, if there were not Judges appointed to decide and determine Differences, notwithstanding the Goodness of the Laws? If you think so, I wou'd fain know how you can suppose that the Divine Wisdom shou'd leave his Church to be governed by the Scripture as interpreted by private Persons?

I am sure it is much more reasonable that he shou'd leave the Power of interpreting the Laws of the Church to those to whom he committed the Power of Governing the Church, promising them his Spirit to guide them in all Truth, - which Commission he first gave to his Apostles, who according to emergent Occasions of the Times, writ the New Testament. Now this Authority, which was committed  
to

## 88 LETTERS, &c.

to them, descended to their Successors, upon whose Authority the Books of Scripture were receiv'd as Canonical; therefore St. *Augustine* says, *Non crederem Evangelio nisi me commoveret Ecclesiæ autoritas*; consequently no private Authority upon what Text soever, can be of any Weight against the Authority of the Church. Your Instance of St. *Paul's* Advice to the *Bereans* to search the Scripture is not to the Purpose: For most certainly if I were to argue with a *Jew*, I wou'd not cite either the New Testament, or the Catholick Church to prove that the *Messias* is come, because they must be of no Force with him; but I wou'd endeavour to convince him by the Old Testament, which he acknowledges to be Divine; as I do you by the Authority of the Catholick Church upon whose

whose Veracity you receive the Scriptures. As to the other Branch of my Question, which was, If the Church which you reformed were not the Catholick Church, what had your Reformers to do with it? Why did not you leave that Work to those to whom God had committed the Government of his Church? And why did you not adhere to it without meddling with the Business which did not concern you? But you will answer me as you have done already, That it concerns every one to defend the Truth. I grant it, if God had not left Means to defend it: But since that he has establish'd Governors in his Church to that end, it is their Business to whom the care of the Church was committed, and not private Persons, who had no such Commission, and whose Business was to submit to the Church, and not to rebel against her.

G

Your

## 98 LETTERS, &c.

Your great Mistake, Sir, in this Dispute lies here; you suppose that we must judge of the Purity of the Church by the Purity of its Doctrine, and the Purity of the Doctrine by the Scripture; and therefore you concluding that the Doctrines of our Church are corrupt, according to your Sense of the Scripture, infer that our Church cannot be the true Church.

Now you don't perceive the Fallacy; for this is explaining *ignotum per ignotius*, because the Purity of Doctrine is *quid ignotum*, and the Sense of Scripture is yet *quid ignotius*.

To illustrate this matter, we shall suppose that a *Turk* who is ill satisfied with his Religion, and has a mind to be a Christian, but seeing so many Divisions amongst us, can't determine his Choice, shou'd apply himself to you, and ask you to what Society of Christians you wou'd advise him to associate himself. Without doubt you  
wou'd

## LETTERS, &c. 99

wou'd say to the Church of *England*; and if he shou'd ask you, why to that more than to any other Church, you wou'd reply because that it professes the purest Doctrine. That is very well, says the *Turk*; but how shall I know that: You will answer him, By the Scripture; but then he will reply, How shall I know the true Sense of the Scripture; by which, and not by the Letter, the Purity of Doctrine is to be tryed? You may perhaps answer to this, that the Sense of Scripture in points of Doctrine is plain. That can't be, says he: For it is impossible that there shou'd be so many Disputes and Divisions amongst Men of Learning and Probity, if the matter of Doctrine were plain; but the Christians being thus divided about Doctrines, and damning one another for them, is a Demonstration that the Sense of Scripture in regard of Doctrines or Articles of Faith is not

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plain,

100 *LETTERS, &c.*

plain, or that Christians are not Men of Learning and Probity. You can't but own that a *Turk* thus arguing against you is unanswerable. But shou'd he apply himself to a *Roman* Catholick, the Catholick wou'd say that our Saviour when on Earth constituted a Church to whose Pastors he left his Spirit, to guide them in all Truth, so that his Church might never fall into Errors and Divisions, and tho' it shou'd be diffused thro' the whole World, converting Infidel Nations to the Christian Faith, yet it shou'd profess but one Faith, and continue so to the end of the World. So that your only Business at present is to find out among all the Christian Churches, which is that Church which has continued without interruption from our Saviour's time till ours, converting Infidel Nations, and to follow her Directions because she can't err, having our Saviour's Promise to protect her.

Your

Your alledging the *Lollards* for the existence of your Church before *H. VIIIth's* days, is but a poor Support for it.

For first it is most certain that they and you differ in many Points, and consequently cou'd not make one Church. Next, that tho' they had not, yet it wou'd have availed you very little; because that they were condemned by the only Christian Church then in being, which was the *Roman Catholick Church*, and consequently it must be the *Catholick Church*, and they justly condemned. *Thirdly*, if you think your cause any thing the better for having some Ancient Hereticks, who profess some of your Doctrines, and oppose some of Ours; I cou'd furnish you with very early Examples of that nature, but they being condemned by the *Catholick Church* makes for us, and against you.

I find by yours, you think I don't comprehend the two Acceptions of the Word Church in Scripture. I thought my distinguishing particular Churches from the Catholick Church had been sufficient to let you know, that I was not ignorant of them. I am sorry to find that you relish the *Question of Questions* so little; it laying the Ax to the Root of the Tree. I confess I have never read it, but I have heard it much commended, and therefore, and because that it treated the Subject we had in hand, I hoped that it might have saved both you and me some pains.

As for my prejudice of Education, to which you attribute my adhering to the Doctrines of the *Roman* Catholick Church, you are mightily out. For I have been Educated with a prejudice against that Church, and yet notwithstanding, its Truth forced me to follow her; the thing which first startled

# LETTERS, &c. 103

startled me was hearing the Doctors at *Oxford* citing the Fathers to the fifth Century, as Opposers of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, praying to Saints, Purgatory, and the like; and finding the contrary true in them. For I cou'd scarce read any of them, in whom I did not find those Doctrines taught. These unsincere Dealings made me begin to question the Tenets of the Church of *England*, being well assured that Truth needs no Falsities to support it. Afterwards I read Bishop *Jewel*, *Chillingworth* and *Stillingfleet*; Men of another sort of a Character than Dr. *Bull*. This I think sufficient to rectify your Opinion about the prejudice of my Education, and I wish that it may have the same effect in other points also, which wou'd be no small satisfaction to,

SIR,

Your most Obedient Humble Servant  
Nov. 29. 1709. and Affectionate Brother,

Wood.

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SIR,

SIR,

Febr. 20. 1709.

I See no Reason that mine of *July* last shou'd surprize you, since I believe it is not from the Novelty of the Errors of your Church, which I have only touched upon, the which I cannot presume you are a Stranger to; and therefore shou'd not surprize you: But as you (in great Civility) say, you find few things therein to the purpose; the which give me leave to examine. All your Letters terminate in this, *The Authority of the Church*. You cry down the Scriptures, advance Tradition, and set up the Authority of the Church above the Word of God. Now having shewn you in my first, that the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith, and are sufficient for Salvation; that the Word Church hath but two Acceptations, the one a few Persons met together to serve God, the other the Faithful dispersed throughout the World,

World, knit together in one Faith, under one Head, *Jesus Christ*: I conceived, I had nothing more to do with your Church of *Rome*, than the Church of *Geneva*. But because I had in Charity allowed her to be a part of the Catholick Church, (tho' a corrupt one) having dismissed your long story of the Authority of the *Romish* Church, I thought it to the purpose to shew you, that your *Romish* Church is so far from being the true Catholick Church, exclusive of others that are not of her Communion; that I think her the most unsound part of the Catholick Church in the whole World; and therefore exposed some of her Errors, and absurd Doctrines, as a proof thereof.

You and I differ in this; you think that God has left a Temporal Visible Head of the Church who is the *Pope*, who presiding over a convenient number of Bishops, have Power to determine

mine what Articles of Faith they please, and enjoyn all Christians, on pain of Damnation, to believe the same. These People you call the *Romish* Catholick Apostolical Church: And whatever is said in Scripture touching the Church, and that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, you apply presently to your *Romish* Church, which is the most absurd thing in the World in my Opinion, for the reasons I have given you in my former. Now I think that *the Scripture has not told us of any such visible Head, nor promised to any representative Body of Men, Infallibility; nor given them such a Power to determine in matters of Faith, and enjoyn them on pain of Damnation to believe them.* But indeed in my second Sense of the Word Church, God hath promised to be with the Church, and so hath been from the time of our Lord Christ, to this day, and so I doubt not but he will be  
to

to the end of the World. But to satisfy you further touching the Authority of the Church. If the Word Church must not be the diffused, but a Representative Body of the Church; hath the Scripture told us, who these Representatives shall be? Shall they be a part of the Clergy, or the whole Clergy? If part of the Clergy, what part? If the whole, 'tis impracticable to call them together. But why must the Clergy be the Church? They are the Pastors of the Flock of Christ, but not the Flock; any more than the Drummers and Trumpeters of an Army are the Army. No Man is to be my Representative unless I chuse him; but if I shou'd chuse him, to think that what he and a Hundred Men more met in a Body, of which peradventure Forty nine are of one Opinion, and Fifty one of another, and the Majority must carry it; and what the Majority fancies for an Article of Faith, that

that I must believe (tho' I see no Reason for it) on pain of Damnation; is the most senseless thing in the World. The greatest Numbers are not always the Wisest; and since you have named the famous *Chillingworth*, let me quote you a passage from him, which is much to the purpose touching our present Debate. \* *By the Religion of Protestants, I do not understand the Doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon, nor the Confession of Augsburg, or Geneva, nor the Catechism of Hedelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England, but the Bible, the Bible, I say the Bible only is the Religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they may believe as matter of Faith and Religion, they cannot do it with coherence to their own ground, nor require the Belief of it of others, without most high and most Schismatical Presumption*

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\* Protestant Religion a safe way, Cap. 6. Sect. 56.

*sumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) Impartial Search of the true way to Eternal Happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any Rest for the Sole of my Feet, but upon this Rock only. I see plainly, and with my own Eyes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves; a Consent of Fathers of one Age, against a Consent of Fathers of another Age; and the Church of one Age, against the Church of another Age: Traditive Interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but few or none to be found: no Tradition, but only of Scripture, can derive itself from the Fountain.*

*In a Word, there is no sufficient Certainty but of Scripture only for any considering Man to build upon: This therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe: this I will profess, according to this I will live, and for this if there be Occasion, I will not only willingly  
but*

## 110 LETTERS, &c.

*but gladly lose my Life, tho' I should be sorry that Christians shou'd take it from me.* Thus far Chillingworth.

The Church of the *Jews* was the true Church of God, both in the days of *Elias*, and in the time of our Saviour: had a thousand times better Pretensions then, to be the Church of God, exclusive of others, than the *Romish* Church now hath: And as much reason to pretend to Infallibility, as the Christian Church, for the same God presided over that Church as over this; and visible Prophets that proved their Mission by Miracles, were occasionally sent to direct them: and yet did not the *Jewish* Church fall into Idolatry, in the days of *Elias*, even as a Church? And did not the *Sanhedrim*, the *Jewish* Council, with a High Priest presiding over them, (which may resemble the Pope sitting in Council) condemn our Lord to Death, and his first Martyr St. *Stephen*?

Where

## LETTERS, &c. III

Where was the Infallibility of this Church, when these things were done by it? and did not the Gates of Hell prevail against Her? But if you take the Word Church in my second Sense, then the Gates of Hell did not prevail against her; for there were the little Flock of the Church left, viz. 7000, who in the time of *Elias* had not bowed their Knees to *Baal*; *Nicodemus*, and *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, and divers others of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, and those not of the *Sanhedrim*, did not consent to the Murder of our Lord, nor of *St. Stephen*.

Your Antiquity and Universality are senseless Marks of the Church. Is not Error and Sin as old as *Adam*? and is not Falshood and Wickedness Universal over the whole Earth? And were not these always visible?

You ask me a very odd Question touching the Veracity of our Translation of the Bible, and *what Security*  
we

## 112 *LETTERS, &c.*

*we have that the Greek Copies from which both your and our Bible were translated, are true, and that nothing was omitted or added to them, or that even the Points were not changed; which alone is enough to change the Sense of the Text? This Exception or Question in the Mouth of a Jew or Pagan, may deserve some Answer; but for a Christian that hath the same Bible that we have, professes the same to be the Word of God, equally binding both Parties, the Romanist and the Protestant, what the meaning is of such a Question, I don't understand: Unless it be this, that you depreciate the Authority of the Bible, the Book of God, to make way for the Inventions and Traditions of your Church.*

*Upon which Account, I think I may justly apply to your Church, what our Saviour did to the Jewish Church in the like case: In vain do ye teach the Tradition of Men, making  
the*

## LETTERS, &c. 113

*the Word of God of no effect.* You boast of your Church as the foolish *Jews* did of their being descended from *Abraham*, which stood them in no stead, unless they did the Works of their Father *Abraham*. I have touch'd before, in my former Letters to you, on the great Folly and Danger of trusting to Traditions: For my part, I can't see how any prudent and honest Man can build any thing upon them. And as for ones being of This or That Communion or Society of Men, call'd by all the gilded, flourishing, glorious Titles of Holy, Catholick, Apostolick, or whatever other Epithet, you or any Man else pleases to give or ascribe to such Communion; and to think that to be of the number of those in ever so strict an Union, or Fellowship, will stand them in any stead, as such; is a most vain and foolish Opinion, without any Ground of Reason, or Authority of the Word of God.

H

Are

## 114 LETTERS, &c.

Are not these the Marks and Evidences of our Eternal Salvation, *viz.* *I was hungry and you fed me ; I was Sick and in Prison, and you visited me ; I was Naked, and you Cloathed me. Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven: Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy: Blessed are the Poor in heart, for they shall see God.* He that practises these Virtues because God commands them, and trusts in the Merits of Christ for Salvation, and not in his own or the Church's Merits or Righteousness, and believes the Apostles Creed ; Let him be of what Communion soever, I believe will be Eternally happy, because Christ has said so, or to that effect.

Oh how fond a thing is it to think that associating of a Man's self to this or that Society of Men, can commend us to God ! We shall all, at the last Day, stand or fall by our own Works, thro' Christ, and not by

## LETTERS, &c. 115

by what Society of Men we have been of: According to your Doctrine, which may be rightly called the Traditions of Men, instead of obeying the Commands of God, one would think that the distinguishing Character which God wou'd give at the last day, in discriminating Mankind, wou'd be this: *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you; for you were a Member of the Holy Catholick Apostolick Romish Church, that damned all that were not of your Communion, and supplied the Defects of my Word, and have perfected the same by your Holy Traditions.* But is there any thing like this in Holy Writ, or is there any Sense in it? Are not the personal Virtues of every Man, the Acts of Charity and Mercy, the Exercise of a pure and holy Mind, and the being of an humble Spirit; in a Word, are not the having an ardent Love and Zeal for the Glory of God, a tender Compassion for all Mankind,

## 116 *LETTERS, &c.*

and a Meek and Holy Spirit, the only Characters that can recommend us to God at the last day? Wou'd any Wise and Good Prince or Ruler of a People, when he came to take an Account of his Servants and Subjects, how they had deputed themselves in their several Stations, ask them what Society of Men they had herded withal, or what Communion or Club they had been of? But rather how they had performed the several Duties enjoined them by their Prince, what good they had done in the World, how beneficial they had been to the rest of Mankind? Certainly, Sir, as the Life of every Man in this World is to be estimated by us here by its Usefulness, so will it be in the World to come.

This was the Doctrine, and this was the Practice of our Saviour's Life; he went about in the day time preaching a righteous and holy Life; pulling down the vile and senseless Traditions  
of

## LETTERS, &c. 117

of the Doctors of the Law, doing Good to the Souls and Bodies of Mankind; and in the Evenings retired to his beloved Garden, with his more beloved Disciples, where he conversed with them more intimately of the Kingdom of Heaven and superlative Virtues.

Let us, dear Sir, follow the Holy Example of our Holy Lord; and then be assured, whatever Communion you are of, you will never miscarry. When one of our Lord's Apostles, even *John* himself, acquainted Christ that he saw a Man casting out Devils in the Name of Christ, and that because he followed not them, (Christ and his Apostles) he forbid him; did not our Lord reprove him for so doing, by saying to him; *Forbid him not; for there is no Man that can do Miracles in my Name, that can lightly speak Evil of me.*

The believing that Christ was the *Messiah*, and doing good to Mankind,

H 3

without

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without an actual, local, personal Communion with Christ and his Apostles, without following his Steps literally, was sufficient at that time to make a Man a good Christian, tho' Christ was visible on Earth: Surely the doing the same now, without acknowledging or being of the *Roman* Communion, will make us good Christians now, unless the *Roman* Church requires a more personal Union to her, than Christ did to himself; or unless a greater than Christ, your *Romish* Church, is here. In short your *Romish* Church and Hierarchy, is a mere politic Institution, to aggrandize the Power of the Priest, and to Lord it over the Flock, the Laity: The Ignorance and Superstition of former Ages, and the Pride and Ambition of the Bishops of *Rome*, have contributed hereunto.

But the World, Thanks be to God, is now grown Wiser, and the Laity  
are

## LETTERS, &c. 119

are Scholars as well as the Clergy, and not to be led by the Nose any longer, and to follow blind Guides.

I am with great Truth a Lover of all Christians and of all Mankind, and particularly,

SIR,

*Your most Humble Servant,*

W. Bulstrode.

---

*Mr. Wood to W. Bulstrode, Esq;*

I Am very sorry, Sir, to find by yours dated *Febr. 20th, 1709.* that I shou'd be so unfortunate as to make use of an Expression so harsh as to shock you. But I hope that you will pardon it, since that *Morales Actiones à fine specificantur*, and that it was not my Intention; and I must not only beg your Pardon for that, but also beg your Leave to complain of your committing the same Fault in your last;

H 4

for

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for what has *I am a Hungry, and you fed me, &c. blessed are the pure in Heart, &c. blessed are the poor in Spirit, &c. or the personal Virtues of every Man, the Acts of Charity and Mercy, the Exercise of a pure and holy Mind, &c.* to do with our present Dispute of finding out the true Church? Had I affirmed that a Man cou'd be saved without these Virtues, you had been in the right; but I never so much as dreamed of any such thing. But here by the by you must give me leave to tell you, that you are very much in the wrong if you believe that these and the like Actions can save a Person without the true Faith. So that a true Faith is absolutely necessary to precede such Actions, without which it is impossible to please God. Now our Dispute is, how to know the true Faith, which teaches us what to do to be saved; I have already proved to you that the only Means which we have  
to

to know it, is to find out the true Church, and it will teach us infallibly what we are to believe, and what we are to do. You on the contrary think the Scripture alone is sufficient for this: But I have sufficiently demonstrated the contrary in my last Letters, and therefore shall pass it by, only taking Notice of two things relating to its Sufficiency without the Church. First, we see by Experience that both all Ancient and Modern Hereticks, who tho' they always made their Appeal to Scripture, yet disagreed among themselves, and wou'd never come to any Union, from whence spring all these numerous Diversities of Religion: Secondly, you bring in the Creed as necessary to be believed, for the Belief of which we have no Scripture, and consequently according to these Words of *Chillingworth* quoted by your self, *The Bible, the Bible I say, is only the Religion of Protestants, whatever else they*  
*may*

*may believe as Matter of Faith and Religion, they cannot do it with coherence to their own Grounds. Now how can you or any Protestant require any one to believe the Creed, since it is not in the Bible. But you will answer me, that tho' the Creed, as it is made or formed, is not in Scripture; yet all the Articles are there, or deduced immediately from thence. To this I answer, that if I cannot find them there, or deduce them from thence immediately, I am not obliged by the Grounds of Protestants to believe them; because according to their Grounds, I am only to believe what I think is according to Scripture; and what I don't think according to Scripture, I may reform as an Error: for it was upon these Grounds or Principles the Reformation was begun; and if these Principles had not been admitted, the Reformation was never to have been begun: For *Luther,*  
*Calvin,**

*Calvin*, and the rest of the Reformers, had nothing else for arrainging the Church then in Being of Errors, but their own Interpretation of Scripture, which, if allowed of, must annihilate the Church. For how can there be a Church without Unity of Faith? And how can there be any Unity of Faith where every one is permitted to believe what they please? Matter of Fact shews this but too plain; for how many different Religions have there appeared in the World since that Reformation, and how is it possible to hinder it, since there is no Coercive Power in the Church, and since that every one may mould it into what shape and figure best pleases his Fancy, which Fancy he calls Scripture? For it is not Scripture, but what Interpretation he puts upon it, which is his Rule. Now this brings us back to our first Question; for as I told you in my first, both you and I and  
any

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any one else had as much Power to correct the pretended Errors of the Church as he had; so we may by the Principles of the Reformation trump up any Religion which we think squares with the Scripture, let it be either Arianism, Socinianism, Quakerism, or any other extravagant Opinion of past Hereticks: Nay more, according to this Principle, it is impossible there shou'd be any such thing as Heresy, and consequently the Church was in the wrong for condemning *Arius, Nestorius, Macedonius, Eutyches, &c.* for Hereticks: these Persons establishing their Doctrines in Scripture as well as you do. Because this Principle of the Reformation admits of private Persons picking and chusing what Doctrine they think according to Scripture, and of rejecting what they think not. Now the Word *Hæresis*, *ab æigēto eligo*, signifies a Choice, and because these Persons did chuse what Doctrines they pleas'd,  
and

and wou'd not submit to the Church, they were branded with the Infamy of an Heretick, *i. e.* a Chuser. But, according to the Principle of the Reformation, the Name of an Heretick can't be an Infamy, because it permits every one to chuse which Doctrine he pleases : and *if any Body of Men shou'd pretend to tie up other Persons to their Opinions, they cannot do it* (as Chillingworth quoted by you rightly observes) *with coherence to their own Grounds, nor require that Belief of others, without most high Schismatical Presumption.* Now this is most certainly true ; for if *Luther, Calvin, Q. Eliz. &c.* were free to make what choice they pleas'd, then every body else had the same Power, which cannot be taken away without destroying the first Principle of the Reformation.

From this Principle these Absurdities follow, *First*, that there can be  
no

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no such thing as Heresy; *Secondly*, that there may be as many Religions as Men; *Thirdly*, that there is no such thing as Church Government; *Fourthly*, let my Religion be ever so absurd, provided that I think it is according to Scripture, I may profess and publish it, and no Power can justly call me to an Account for it; *Fifthly*, that by this Rule you can neither condemn none of our Doctrines, nor those of your Dissenters justly, and consequently the persecuting of us for them is very unjust: For why shou'd you persecute any one for following a Principle which is the Fundamental of the Reformation? Now answer me these Absurdities, and then you will answer my Letters, and to the purpose.

The only Answer I find in all your Letters to this matter is,

First, that *every Man that is a Lover of Truth ought to oppose Error wherever*

*whereever he sees it.* Right: but let him take special Care that he does not oppose Truth instead of Error. But you reply, that the Reformers only opposed and corrected the Errors of our Church. To this I answer, that this is a precarious *petitio principii*. Next, that I have shewed already the Absurdity of such a Pretext.

The Second, is, these Words of yours. *Our Reformation under Edward VI, and Q. Eliz. was order'd with the greatest Decency and the universal Consent of the Prince, Lords Spiritual and Temporal, with the Representatives of the whole Body of the People, as learned, a freer Body, and more universal than the Synod of Trent.* To this I first answer, that if this Prince, Lords Spiritual and Temporal, with the Representatives, should become Quakers or Jews, and they establish a new Religion by Law, with Order and Decency, wou'd This make it a true Religion

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ligion and valid? and wou'd the Subjects be obliged to be of it? If it wou'd not, then certainly yours wou'd not be obligatory; for you have nothing else for yours but Laws made by them, therefore in all your Edicts and Acts of Parliaments, you say the Protestant Religion establish'd by Law, so that if the Power of the Nation falls into the Hands either of the Presbyterians, Quakers, Independants, or of any other Sect, and it is pleased to change the Religion establish'd by Law, and receiv'd by the whole Nation, (as they have done once already) and to establish another by their new Laws; that the old Religion becomes then null, and the new one good: You will reply, provided that they only reform the Errors as you did; but This is still begging the Question; for you will have what we call Truths to be Errors, and you will be Judges of it, or at least you will have your Prince,  
your

your Lords Spiritual and Temporal, with the House of Commons, to be Judges of it, and at the bottom you will have every private honest Man to judge whether they are in the Right; and if any honest Man sees them not in the Right, he might and ought to oppose their Errors: Now what a Medley and Confusion of Power and no Power, of Government and Anarchy is here at the same time? Either the Catholick Church is an Hierarchy, or it is not: If it is not, then every one may believe what he pleases; if it be, then it must have Persons to govern, and they must have an Authority to command others to obey and believe them, or else there can be no Government: If they have this Power, then those who are Subjects to this Church, such as *Luther* and *Calvin*, &c. were, are Rebels in refusing to hear and obey the Governours of this Church; notwithstanding all their specious Pretexes of Errors and Superstitions. I shan't

concern my self with humane Traditions, nor decrying the Scriptures, as being Accusations that don't concern us; neither do we believe, that the bare Associating our selves to any Body of Men, without the Practice of good Works, will save us; no, we believe no such Doctrine; but we and all Learned Protestants believe, that out of the true Church of God there is no Salvation, notwithstanding that the Person leads a good Moral Life. I see very well that you bring all those that profess themselves to be Christians into the Catholick Church, professing Latitudinarism, the Absurdity of which you have seen or may at least see in *Sacheverell's* Sermon, pag. 16. 17.

Your alledging that Sin and Error have been from *Adam*, is nothing to the point; for I never denied it: But to infer from thence, therefore God's Church has erred, I deny the Consequence. Your inferring from the *Jews* Church

Church failing (which never did) to the Catholick, will not hold; because our Church is Established on better Promises, as *St. Paul* tells us, *Heb. 8.*

*v. 6.* Your applying our Saviour's Reproach to the *Jews* boasting of their being lineally descended from *Abraham*, does not concern us, for we don't pretend to be saved, merely because we are *Roman* Catholicks, abstractedly from Good Works, as the *Jews* did for being descended from *Abraham*.

You tell me that you don't understand the meaning of my Question, *how we prove the Scripture to be the Word of God, and what warrant we have for its being truly translated*, unless it be to depreciate the Word of God. I think that the meaning of this Question is so plain, that it needs no Explanation: For does it not shew the absolute necessity of the Testimony of the Catholick Church for it, and that

## 132 LETTERS, &c.

to destroy the Authority of the Church, is to destroy the Authority of the Bible? St. *Augustin* thought so, when he said *non crederem Evangelio nisi me commoveret Ecclesie autoritas*, and so did other Protestants whom I have cited in my other Letters; tho' you and Dr. *Stillingfleet* may hope to evade a pertinent Question, by slubbring it over with such a Gloss.

Now to avoid the further cavilling about the *Roman* Catholick Church, and to give a finishing stroke to all Disputes about particular Doctrines, in which we differ; let me endeavour once more to shew you which is the Catholick Church, since we are both agreed that the Gates of Hell should never prevail against it, and since that the Holy Ghost was sent to direct it in all Truth, so that it cou'd neither admit nor teach any Errors. You confess as well as I do, that these Promises of Protection (which include Infallibility)

## LETTERS, &c. 133

Infallibility) belong only to the Catholick or Universal Christian Church, and not to any particular Church. Now I affirm that this Catholick Christian Church, must be either ours alone, or yours alone, or some of your Sectary's Churches alone, or else ours and yours together, with all other Churches which profess Christ: But it can't be either yours separately, or any of your Sectary's, for the Reason which I gave you in my last, where I proposed this very Question; neither can it be ours and yours with all other Churches which profess Christ, which is what you wou'd be at; because the Catholick Church is but one, that is, it hath but one Faith; but ours and yours and their Church can't constitute the Catholick Church; since therefore, that neither yours alone nor other Sectaries alone, which profess Christ, nor ours and yours joyned with other Churches of the Sectaries can

constitute the Catholick Church; it does necessarily follow, that it must be ours alone, or else that the Church of God has failed, which can't be: You will answer me, that this Unity in believing Christ to be the *Messiah*, and in believing the Apostle's Creed, which all Christian Churches do, is a sufficient Unity to constitute the Universal or Catholick Church, and that a Unity in other points of Doctrine are not at all requisite: I see plainly, that this Principle of the *Latitudinarians* is what you declare for; but *Sacheverell* having sufficiently shewed the Absurdity of this Principle, I shall only ask you by what place of Scripture (which alone is your Rule of Faith) do you prove that this is sufficient? Or as I have already said, how do you prove by Scripture, that it is necessary to believe the Creed. I know that there are very few Articles in it, which have not been denied by  
some

some Hereticks, at one time or other, tho' they pretended to prove what they asserted by Scripture, and tho' you may pretend that all the Articles of the Creed are evidently in Scripture, I will here give you an instance of the Insufficiency of your Unity, and shew that tho' one shou'd believe in Christ, and believe the Creed, practising all Moral Virtues, yet this wou'd not be sufficient for Salvation: An Anabaptist believes in Christ, and believes the Creed; but you can't nor will not say that he can be saved without Baptism; so that from hence you may plainly see, how defective this Scheme of Faith is.

I do admire that a Man of your Sense, Learning and Capacity, who intends not to pin his Faith upon any Man's Sleeve, shou'd not examine the Fathers, and see which was the good old Religion, and not depend upon the Veracity of your

## 136 LETTERS, &c.

Controvertists, who don't stick to transgress the Limits of Truth in their Citation of the Fathers; can there be any thing more notoriously false than the Words of *Chillingworth*, cited by you; I see plainly, and with my own Eyes, *Councils against Councils* (if he means General Councils, it is false) *a Consent of Fathers of one Age, against a Consent of Fathers of another Age; the Church of one Age, against the Church of another Age.* If I cou'd find what he said here to be true, I wou'd soon discard all Revealed Religion, and wou'd turn Deist; for I don't see any Argument that can be more for a Deist's purpose than this, and if the Truth were known he was one in Masquerade; for a Confirmation of which I can give you a very good Testimony, that at the bottom he was such, notwithstanding his Book which he writ against us; *Chillingworth* having an intimate Friend-

Friendship with the Gentleman of the Horse to the Grandfather (as I think) of the present Lord *Mountague* of *Coudrey*, was asked by this Gentleman (who hearing all the World extolling *Chillingworth* for his great Learning, and particularly in Controversy) as a true and sincere Friend to tell him his Opinion freely and candidly, which was the true Religion; to which he answered in short, that he shou'd keep to the Religion in which he was (which was the Roman Catholick) for if there were any Religion, that it was the Right; and that if there were none, that the worst that cou'd happen to him was but so much Pains lost. I don't say that these are the Words of his Letter, but I remember that they were much to this purpose. Now it is plain by this Letter (which I don't doubt but that you will say it is feigned) that this great Champion of your Religion was but a Sceptick in Religion

at

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at the best, and what most of your greatest Men are; for if they can believe that so many Learned and Holy Men have been deceived for so many Ages in a Matter of this Consequence, have they not reason to doubt, that these latter Ages have been deceived so too; and so consequently there must be very little or no Security of the Certainty of the Christian Faith? For my part, I don't see what such an Argument can drive at, but at the undermining the Catholick Religion; for if it be true that *Councils are against Councils, a Consent of Fathers of one Age against a Consent of Fathers of another Age*, as *Chillingworth* affirms, we can have no Security for the Truth of the Faith, and nothing can give it such a mortal Stab as it wou'd; but thanks be to God, that what he says is notoriously false, and therefore look your self into the Fathers, and see where the Truth lies. For it will be but a  
poor

poor Excuse at the last Day to say, that you trusted to Dr. *Chillingworth*, or Dr. *Bull*, and that you had not time to search into the Fathers to find the Truth; should God then expostulate the Case with you thus, *How came you to trust your Controvertists? Did ever I promise them my Spirit to direct them? Or did I ever say, whosoever hears them hears me? No, I never made any such Promise, either to them, or to you, or to any particular Person; but I did to my Church, whose Voice you refused to hear, hearing and believing her Apostates, or their Sectarists, to her Prejudice: Had you but follow'd the Dictates of an unbyass'd Reason, it must have told you, that it is much more reasonable to believe that one or two Persons may be deceived than Thousands shou'd, Supposing that I had not promised them my Protection: What answer wou'd you, or cou'd you make in such a Case? You wou'd perchance*  
 answer,

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answer, that you your self saw plainly Doctrines which the Scripture condemned evidently, such as Purgatory, Praying to the Saints, Transubstantiation, &c. May it not be answer'd, that it is very strange that these Doctrines should be condemned evidently by Scripture, and yet so many Holy and Learned Men met in General Councils to condemn Errors should let these pass, and even condemn those particular Persons who opposed them; therefore you don't find these Doctrines condemned by Scripture, but you believe them to be such, because you have been taught so by Persons, or their Sectaries, who have left God's Church to follow their own Fancies and Whims, from which may God of his infinite Mercy deliver every honest Man!

This I writ at the Camp, where at present I am; but how long, or where I shall go next, I am totally in the  
Dark;

# LETTERS, &c. 141

Dark; but let me be wheresoever it shall please Providence, I shall always be, SIR,

*Your most Obedient, Humble Servant,*

*And Affectionate Brother,*

June 14.  
1710.

W O O D.

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SIR,

July 29. 1710.

**Y**Ours of the 14th of the last Month is come to my Hands, which I had answered sooner had I not been prevented by Business. I perceive you are willing to put an end to our Dispute, (and indeed so am I too) and have put me upon answering some Objections which you call Absurdities, flowing from my Principles, and then you Comfort me with the agreeable News, That then I shall have answer'd  
your

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your Letter, and to the Purpose. But before I enter upon this mighty Combat, give me leave, I beseech you, to shew you how you have fallen into my Principles before you were aware; whence I observe how natural Truth is, when not perverted by Art.

I have been contending all along, that a Man is to use his Understanding in working out his Salvation; that accordingly he is to embrace Truth wherever he finds it; that his private Judgment, at least to himself, is to guide him in his Faith and Actions; wherein I acknowledge every Man ought, according to his Ability and Opportunity, to inform himself in the best Manner that he can, besides Prayer to God for Illumination; and that the Scriptures of themselves are the Rule of Faith, and sufficient for Salvation; and that no Article of Faith by any Councils (since that of the Apostles) or Tradition whatsoever, ought to be imposed  
on

on Mankind as Terms of Communion, that are not clearly mentioned in the Scripture, or evidently to be deduced from thence; and that in this Case, every Man must judge at his Peril for himself; altho' if after a sincere and honest Enquiry after the Truth, a Man should be mistaken and embrace Error, I am confident such a Mistake will not be fatal to any of us in the Judgment of an all-wise and merciful God; for why should God give us Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, and a Heart to understand, if we were not to make use of them? Even in seeking Knowledge at the Priest's Lips, we must use our Understanding to weigh what they say, and not put out our own Eyes to see with theirs. But you, on the contrary, have endeavoured to prove, that we must give up our Understandings to the Church, that this Church is the *Roman* Church; that we must blindly follow what she dictates; that when we have  
 once

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once found her out, Oh happy Men!  
We are then safe, for she will guide us  
into all Truth. A very pretty Scheme!

But now, Sir, see into what a Pit  
you are fallen, and how you have  
blown up all these Maxims and Princi-  
ples by a Sentence or two, in the Let-  
ter you last honoured me with. In  
Page the first, you tell me, That the  
Virtue of feeding the Hungry, Purity  
of Heart, and Meekness of Spirit,  
&c. which I urged as *Criteria*, by  
which we shall be judged at the Last  
Day, will not save us without a True  
Faith. I pray, Who said they would?  
for I subjoyn'd Faith in God the Fa-  
ther, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the  
Apostles Creed. You go further and  
say, That without this true Faith we  
cannot please God, and that the way to  
find out this true Faith, is to find out  
the true Church, and that will teach us  
infallibly. Now, I pray, Sir, how  
shall I find out this true Church? Must

I not

I not read the Books of Controversy that dispute about the true Church? Must I not read both Sides of the Controversy? Must I not then judge and consider, by the Strength and Force of the Arguments brought on each Side, which is in the Right, and which in the Wrong? Must I not then judge for my self, which Side to follow? Is not this setting up private Judgment? And if I must judge for my self how to find out the Church, surely I may judge whether she that pretends to be the true Church, is the true Church or no? To believe she is the true Church, Exclusive of others, because she calls her self so, is no Argument to one that is not of her Communion. If you shou'd hear a lewd Woman in virtuous Company brag of her Chastity, declaim against Uncleanness in a very warm manner; wou'd you think her ever the more Chaste, who knew her well before? Certainly no. Well

K

then:

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then: Your calling the Church of *Rome* the true Church, does not prove her so; and if I may, and must use my Understanding to find out the true Church, I do find by my Understanding that yours is but a part of the true Church, and not the true Church exclusive of others, but a corrupt part of it. Had you thoroughly weighed the two Notions of the Word Church, which I mentioned in my first, this Enquiry of finding out the true Church had been at an end.

Now as to the matter of Faith, let me say a Word or two. I do agree great things are said of Faith in the Scripture, especially by the Author to the *Hebrews*, whose Heroes in *Heb. 11. 9.* his 11th Chap. which he enumerates, did great things by Faith; that is, by believing in God, and loving his Majesty, which Faith and Love produced in them acceptable Works; these acceptable Works were the effect of  
of

# LETTERS, &c. 147

of Faith: Now Faith, by this Author, hath two Significations; the one, an entire Credit and Belief, Trust and Confidence in God's Promises or Assertions, be it from a Principle of Love, or Fear, or Belief of his Veracity, *e. g. through Faith we understand that the Worlds* <sup>Gen. 1. 1. ver. 2.</sup> *were framed by the Word of God, &c. by Faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,* <sup>ver. 7.</sup> *moved with Fear prepared an*

*Ark, &c.* The other Signification of Faith is the doing of somewhat which God commands, upon a Principle of Obedience to his Majesty, and which must take in the entire Belief of the Divine Existence. Wherefore 'tis said, *without Faith 'tis impossible to please God:* <sup>ver. 6.</sup> Then follows the Reason; *for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them, that diligently seek him.* Now before the Law the World

## 148 LETTERS, &c.

being very wicked, and given to Idolatry, First, to believe in the true God was rare and very acceptable to his Majesty: Secondly, the doing of Actions by the Light of Nature as Acts of Obedience to God, as performing the Moral Law; or upon a positive institution, by Revelation, as the case of *Abraham* in the Act of Circumcision, leaving his Native Country, offering up his Son, &c. These were Actions still more acceptable to God, as not only believing the Existence of the Divine Nature, but obeying his Majesty as a Creature ought to his Creator. Then as to Faith, under the Gospel Dispensation, great things are said of it, both in the Gospels and Epistles, as, *by Faith one may*

*remove Mountains into the*  
 Mark 11. v. 23.

*Sea, &c. a Man is justified by Faith without the*  
 Rom. 3. 18.

*Deeds of the Law, &c. and in infinite other places, which in your concordance*

# LETTERS, &c. 149

dance (to which I refer you) you may easily see.

Now Faith in the Gospel Sense, is much the same as under the Law: For as under the Law it is said, *the Just shall live by Faith,* <sup>Heb 2. 4.</sup> so it is said under the Gospel that *Men are sanctified by Faith,* <sup>Acts. 26. 18.</sup> &c. But our Faith under the Gospel is somewhat enlarged to what it was under the Law: They had not so explicit a Belief of our Saviour before his coming as to his Birth, the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature, his Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, as we have since his coming. Now since God has done so great an Act for Mankind as to send his own Son Consubstantial with the Father to assume our Nature, meanly to be born, poorly to live, and to illuminate Mankind with greater Measures of Knowledge of God and Eternal Life than ever was before done by all the Prophets

150 *LETTERS, &c.*

phets and Philosophers put together, and at last to dye for the Sins of the World, and to give such Evidence of his Divine Power by such Miracles as no Man before ever did, accompanied with a most Holy Life, and giving Institutions of infinite Excellency and Goodness: When God the Father had set his Seal (if I may so say) on his Son our Lord, as undoubted Credentials of his Divine Mission; not to believe this Person so sent and acting, tends to overthrow the Oeconomy of God in his Moral Government of the World, and to stifle the greatest Act of Love that ever God exhibited to the Children of Men; I had almost said, that ever cou'd. As to reject God our Saviour by Disbelief, thus coming to redeem us, when sufficiently revealed, must be the highest Act of Ingratitude, and the greatest Sin in the World; so believing firmly in this Jesus our Lord, must produce  
in

## LETTERS, &c. 151

in Mankind such a Love to his Majesty, such a Gratitude, such an Obedience, such a Trust and such a Confidence, such a Constellation of Christian Virtues as will sanctifie our Nature, and render us acceptable to the Divine Being: These things being granted, we need not wonder at the glorious things said of a true Faith or saving Faith, *i. e.* Faith productive of the Works I have spoken of? *for the Devils believe and tremble.*

James 2. 19.

But what has this Faith so glorious to do with the Creed of Pope *Pius* the IVth, which enjoyns many things to be believed which the Holy Apostles never taught, the Scriptures are silent in, and no Man on Earth hath Power to impose? And so much for Faith.

Now to your Objections.

*First*, that according to my Principles there can be no such thing as Heresy; for that we Protestants al-

## 152 LETTERS, &c.

low Men to judge of the Scripture as they please; in Opposition to which you enjoyn the Members of your Church to believe what your Church teaches, *i. e.* by your Meaning, what the Priests tell them, and the Synod of Trent hath defined, &c. In your Creed of Pope Pius the IVth, added to that of the Nicene, your twenty fourth Article in *English* runs thus: *I do also without the least doubt receive and profess all other things which have been delivered, defined and declared by the Sacred Canons, and Oecumenical Councils, and especially by the Holy Synod of Trent, and all things contrary thereunto, and all Heresies whatsoever condemned, rejected and Anathematized by the Church, I do likewise condemn, reject and Anathematize: This true Catholick Faith, without which no Man can be saved, which at this time I freely profess and truly embrace, I will be careful (by the help of God) that the same be retained and firmly pro-*

*professed whole and inviolate as long as I live, &c.*

I confess that the Clergy of all Churches are very fond of their own Sentiments, very free of their Anathema's, and are apt to assume a sort of Infallibility, by calling their own Tenets and Doctrines Holy and Orthodox, and that of other Churches different from theirs, Heresie, and Heterodox. But being not attached to any Party of Christians, but a Lover of Truth, the whole Christian People and all Mankind, give me leave to give you my Thoughts hereon. First, I say, that " no Man can  
 " believe upon Rational Grounds and  
 " Understanding, what he pleases, but  
 " he must believe or disbelieve, according as the Object of Faith  
 " proposed to him brings with it a  
 " more or less clear Evidence of Conviction. If the Object of Faith  
 " carries with it a strong and clear  
 " Evidence of Conviction, an honest  
 " Man

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“ Man believes firmly, and acts suitably to such Belief; if the Evidence be faint, he doubts and wavers in his Actions: If not at all evident, he totally rejects it. ”

Now I wou'd fain know, what Faith or even degree of Assent a Romanist can give to those things which have been delivered, defined and declared by General Councils; whose Subject matter not one in a Million of your Church has ever so much as heard of? And yet the Pastors of your Church tye the poor Flock to the Repetition of a Creed, wherein they curse they know not whom, they know not why; nay, they curse themselves; for they Anathematize all Heresies, (*i. e.* the Persons that profess the same, for they don't curse Words) condemned by the Church; for I doubt not but divers of your Church embrace some Opinions contrary to some Definition or other of your Councils.

Happy

Happy were those Christians that lived in our Saviour's days, and even under the ten Persecutions ! For their Faith was only in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost ; and their Practice, the use of the Sacraments and a Holy Life : But the Popish Creeds, to a wise and honest Man so unreasonable, that they are worse than the Ten Persecutions. Why shou'd your Terms of Communion be straiter now, than in our Saviour's time, when on Earth ? But this large Faith, or rather Credulity, that you require, puts me in mind of an *Irish* Papist, that was an ordinary ignorant Fellow, and was executed for some Notorious Crimes a few Years since, who by the help (I suppose) of some wise *Popish* Priest, made Confession of his Faith (as Malefactors at the time of Execution often do) to this effect, *That he was a Roman Catholick, and dyed in the Communion of that Church, and believed as the Catholick Church ever did believe,*  
now

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*now doth believe, or ever shall believe.*  
He was resolved not to be damned for not believing enough.

Now suppose a Man shou'd have some Heterodox Opinions, as that of a Millenarian, or that we shou'd have the same Friendships in the next Life as in this, &c. Why shou'd these and twenty such Innocent Opinions hinder Church Communion, and joining in Prayer together? As for the Word Heresy, anciently, even with the Learned, it had a good Sense, for it signified no more than to adhere to an Opinion one had chose; but your Church has branded that Word with Reproach.

And whatever Sentiments Men have in Matters of Religion, differing from what some Councils have condemned; those Opinions you call Heresie, and the Persons Hereticks; by which Rule many Persons are Hereticks now, that were not so fifteen hundred Years ago :  
Your

Your Church may delight in giving hard Names; I envy you not the Pleasure: But I think that Heresie is more properly an Act of the Will, than of one's Judgment, and therefore to condemn Men to the Fire for thinking amiss (*unless in the Case of Blasphemy*) in Matters of Religion, is the most unreasonable and cruel Thing in the World: For my part, I cou'd joyn in Prayer with an Arian, who contends only, *pro puncto Temporis in quo Filius non erat*: For what have I to do with his erroneous Opinion?

Your next Exception, or Absurdity, as you call it, is that on my Principles, *There may be as many Religions as Men*; this I deny; for if ten, or a hundred Men believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and sufficient for Salvation, &c. tho' they may differ touching Free-will, Predestination in the rigid Sense, God's Prescience of future

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future Contingencies, and other moot Points in School Divinity ; yet they may all be good Christians, be of one Religion, joyn in Prayer together, and go to Heaven, notwithstanding such Differences in Opinion.

*Thirdly*, Your third Exception is, That there is no such Thing as Church Government. This likewise is a Mistake ; for tho' I agree it is necessary as to Church Government, that there should be a Unity of Doctrine in a National Church, yet there can be no necessity to subscribe to Articles of Faith or Discipline, by any but the Pastors that are to teach, who ought to preach the same Doctrine, otherwise Confusion would follow.

*Fourthly*, *Let my Religion be ever so absurd, provided that I think it is according to Scripture, I may profess and publish it, and no Power can justly call me to an Account for it.* I suppose you had not my Letter by you  
when

when you put down this Absurdity, for I have in none of my Letters carry'd it so far; nor can any Inference or Conclusion from what I have said extend to this Absurdity. I have said indeed, that every honest Man ought to embrace Truth wherever he finds it, and decently to oppose Error where he sees it: But I have said nothing of Publishing a Man's Religion, or that no Power can justly call one to account for it that does publish it: How far a Christian of the Reform'd Church, if he were in a Popish Country, and seeing and hearing the Invocation and Adoration of the Virgin *Mary*, and the Adoration of the Host, which he thinks Idolatrous, shou'd think himself oblig'd to expose those Errors, I must leave to his Prudence and Christian Courage; but I must freely own to you, if the Government should put such a one to Death for so doing, I think he would die a better Martyr than many in your Martyrology.

Fifthly,

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Fifthly. Your fifth Exception is, *That by this Rule we can neither condemn any of your Doctrines, or those of the Dissenters justly, and consequently the persecuting of Papists for them is very unjust: For why should we persecute any for following a Principle that is fundamental of the Reformation?* To which I answer, That to condemn a Doctrine, and to persecute Persons that profess such Doctrine, are too distinct Propositions: The latter does not always follow the former; our Universities do condemn Doctrines, but they do not pretend to prosecute the Professors or Publishers of the same, and the Government seldom goes further. And as for the Prosecution of any Dissenters from the Church of *England*, on the account of a Diversity of Opinion from our Establish'd Church's Doctrine, or not coming to our Churches; nothing of that sort has been done since the Death of King *Charles the 1<sup>st</sup>*, yet the Government  
has

has taken care of Divine Worship, by requiring that all Persons shall every Lord's Day come to our Church, or to some Religious Meetings approved of by our Laws.

But I think there is a great Difference between the Government indulging our Protestant Dissenters, and the *Popish* Dissenters; for first, very few of them differ from us in Points of Doctrine, which you of the Church of *Rome* do even in Fundamentals; they differ from us generally only in Discipline, and are not for Liturgies: *Secondly*, they disown as well as we all foreign Ecclesiastical Power, and rest in the Supremacy of the Queen, in all matters Sacred as well as Civil; but Papists acknowledge another Head in Spirituals, and wou'd be for bringing in a Foreign Power in Ecclesiastical Matters, which wou'd tend to the Disturbance of the State; and there-  
L
fore

fore they are not permitted, not upon a Religious, but a Political Reason.

You challenged me in your last to answer the Five Absurdities abovementioned, and have declared that when I have so done I shall have answered your Letter to the Purpose. I hope, Sir, that the Answers I have given you to them will be Satisfactory: Wherein they are deficient, if you please to let me know, I will endeavour to supply them.

The great Mistakes which you Gentlemen of the *Roman* Communion are in, I think consists in these matters: *First*, that you think it proper that there shou'd be a Judge of Controversies in the Church, to put an end to all Disputes; therefore you think there is one: *Secondly*, as you affect an absolute Monarchy in the State, so you think it necessary in the Church. *Thirdly*, you wou'd oblige all Mankind to think and believe alike, and that for  
Unity

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Unity sake, under pain of being condemned for the damnable Sin of Heresie. *Fourthly*, you oblige even the Laity to parrot over Creeds, to the Words whereof 'tis morally impossible they can affix any Ideas; (besides that of the Trinity.) The doing of which can be no more pleasing to God, than if a Parrot shou'd pronounce so many Words. Now these and many more of your Tenets I humbly apprehend are quite wrong: Men are very short-sighted, and to think that God hath ordered Matters after this manner, because you fancy them proper so to be, when we have no Warrant or Ground for them in Holy Writ, is to make your selves wiser than God.

As to the first, had we the Meekness and Charity of the Primitive Christians, we should bear with one another in our Differences of Opinion, and not break Communion

for it; and then there wou'd be no need of a Judge of Controversies. Besides, those Men who are so warm as to broach new Opinions, and are for imposing them on others, may be overcome by a Supreme Judicature passing Sentence thereon; but they are never a whit altered in their Judgment by such a Determination, and will still whisper their Opinions where they dare not speak out.

*Secondly,* As I see no Warrant in Holy Writ for a Supremacy in the Apostles, neither do I see any Reason for it in their Successors. The Government of the Church does not require it, as we see in many well-governed Churches among the Reformed.

*Thirdly,* As there are different Complexions and Educations of Men, different Prejudices and Notions impressed  
on

on Men's Minds when young; so there will be to the end of the World different Sentiments and Opinions in Men of the same Religion touching Casuistical Points and School Divinity; and yet for all this Diversity, and notwithstanding this Difference of Opinion in some Points, surely modest and humble Men (and such ought all Christians to be) may live in the Bands of Peace and Affection, and unite together in the common Offices of Christianity, *viz.* of adoring God in publick, in being useful to Mankind, and promoting the Welfare of Humane Nature in general, and keeping our selves pure and unspotted from the World. If one Christian thinks the happy Soul departed sleeps till the Day of Judgment, another that it goes into a place of Ease, but not of Happiness, a third that it goes into the highest degree of Glory; why

L ;                      shou'd

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shou'd these and such like Sentiments make me separate from the Communion of Worship with those from whom I differ in such Opinions? Did not the *Sadducees*, *Pharisees* and *Essenes* differ in their Opinions, and that in matters of Substance, and yet joyn together in their Sacrifices and Adorations of the Eternal?

*Fourthly*, To what purpose is your clogging of Creeds upon Mankind? *St. Peter* complained that the Yoke of the *Jewish* Law was very heavy, by reason of Circumcision, Abstinence from divers Meats, and the Obligation of observing other parts of the Ritual Law: Were he now alive, I am perswaded he wou'd expunge all the Creeds but that called the Apostles. Happy had it been for Christians, if the Christian Religion had been left in the Simplicity and Purity, as it is expressed

expressed in the Scripture, and not upon the condemning an Opinion we call Heresie establish a new Article of Faith, never before thought of, with a necessity of believing it on pain of Damnation; as that in the Mass, there is offered a true, proper and Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Quick and Dead; that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really and substantially the Body and Blood together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; that the Saints together with Christ are to be Worshipped and Prayed to; that the *Roman* Church is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, &c. These may be called Opinions, but they ought not to be honoured with the Title of Articles of Faith. For the Existence of God, and his Veracity, and other Attributes, seem worthy only to be the Objects of Humane Faith,

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according to the import of that Word in Holy Writ.

The defining the Divine Nature is a bold thing in Man : Who can tell the Number of the Stars, take the Height of Heaven, or Depth of the Sea? And shall we poor Animals pretend to describe the infinite God, Creator of all these? Man, that cannot make a Fly, a Blade of Grass, or the meanest Mineral, that knows not how the Substance of a Joynt-Stool adheres together; shall he pretend to define, declare and determine the Essence of the Divine Majesty, with an Anathema against all that presume to contradict this Definition and Determination? O Impudent Humane Nature ! Let us lay our hands on our Mouths, and humble our selves in Dust and Ashes, and say we know nothing of God, but that he is good  
and

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and gracious to us, and that we ought to Love his Majesty better than Life it self. I pray God illuminate you and me in the Ways that tend to Eternal Life, and let us love God, and love our Brethren, and walk in Humility and Meekness of Spirit before the Eternal, and be assured we shall never miscarry in this World, or in that which is to come.

I thank you, Dear Sir, for the Trouble you have given your self upon my Account. I am persuaded you did it in Christian Charity, for which I shall always honour you. But the Light of the Gospel shines too bright in my Eyes, not to see the *Egyptian* Darknes of Popish Error, Superstition, and Idolatry; for which Reason I shall dye a Martyr, rather than embrace a Religion that is contrary to the Scriptures, my Reason, and my

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my Sensation. Adieu, Dear Sir. I  
am with great Respect,

*SIR,*

*Your most Affectionate Brother*

*and Humble Servant,*

Whit. Bullstrode.

*P O S T S C R I P T.*

Sir, You accuse me in your last  
of being a Latitudinarian, which I  
perceive you judge a great Fault in  
me. To which I give this Answer,  
that Man being made after the Di-  
vine Image, he comes nearest to the  
Divine Original who exercises Acts  
of Love and Charity to all Man-  
kind, nay to the whole Creation :  
For

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For God exercises Acts of Love and Goodness to the whole World; and he differs most from the Divine Pattern, who is so narrow-soul'd as to love only a Party of Men, and to shut up his Bowels of Compassion to the rest.



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**I**N the Preface; for *Romish*, read *Roman*; for *Years*, r. *Ages*;  
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